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How they Were

Taught.

in a

Trap.

A Tale of France.  
in 1802.

By ESME STUART.



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CAUGHT IN A TRAP

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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**"HE BEHELD THE EMPEROR STANDING THERE  
ALONE."—p. 144.**

HOW THEY WERE  
CAUGHT IN A TRAP

A Tale of France in 1802

BY  
ESMÈ STUART

AUTHOR OF "MIMI;" "THE GOOD OLD DAYS; OR, CHRISTMAS IN THE TIME  
OF QUEEN ELIZABETH;" "MASTER TRIM'S CHARGE," &c.



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## CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### BIDDING FAREWELL.

**I** MUST begin my story by introducing you to a sad family party who are now assembled in the sitting-room of an old Parsonage house, just outside the ancient Cathedral town of Paston. The wintry sun is shining in through the small panes of the casement, and the golden light falls on the old oak panelling, and gleams in and out amongst the group now sitting round the fire, for the weather is chilly, and there is much wood on the glebe, so that those huge logs may be had for nothing. The room is long, narrow, and wainscotted throughout, and would delight the eyes of a modern painter; but the present occupants know only that they are at home,

and have never considered further of its various merits.

On a large couch near the fire a young girl is now lying; her pale, thin face tells plainly enough that she is an invalid, and, moreover, the look of peevish discontent which she wears shows us that she is an unwilling, fretful patient. This is Joyce Dacre, for whose sake the happy family party is about to break up. Near her stands her father, the Reverend Martin Dacre, who is now speaking to his wife, a young-looking woman, who is her husband's support, his adviser, and altogether his right hand. In various attitudes may also be seen Patience, the eldest daughter of the house, who for the last year has been engaged to Edwin Payne; Master Jasper, who is already one of the King's midshipmen, though now at home for a brief holiday, just now imparting a great deal of nautical information to his eldest brother, Christopher, a young deacon; and there, lastly, is the youngest child, commonly called "Baby," though she is five years old, and who has been duly christened "Gabrielle."

So now you can see all the family before

you—the elderly clergyman; the pretty, gentle-looking mother; dreamy, conscientious Christopher; wise Patience, who is not troubled with unnecessary imagination; poor, fretful Joyce; Jasper, who already quite looks upon himself as a support to the British navy; and then Baby. One other we have passed over, and this is Edwin Payne, who also is here this evening; he is in the diplomatic line, and expects to become a consul, governor, or what not, if he lives long enough. Of one thing he is however certain, and this is that Patience will grace any station to which she may attain; he too, on this particular evening, looks with no special favour upon poor Joyce. No wonder that people say “poor Joyce,” because she is always trying to please herself, but never succeeds; while she never thinks of pleasing other people, and seems to do so only by accident. Yet, in spite of these failings, there is a warm place in her mother’s heart for poor Joyce, and she often tells her husband that Joyce will turn out to be something—she does not say what—when she has regained her health and spirits.

I have already hinted that the poor invalid



is the cause of the general sadness pervading the family, but it must be owned that this time it was not through her own fault that she had brought trouble upon them. Her father had taken her to consult a certain famous doctor, and he had said that the best plan would be to take the young lady quite away from home, and from England too, if possible; he recommended a place in France as the most likely to suit her health; this place was called "Baume," and was the home of a friend of his, a Marquis, whom he had had under his care when a refugee in England during the troubles of the French revolution.

The same Marquis de Baume had been very grateful to the English doctor who had, as he declared, saved his life, so that when the nobleman was restored to his château and his lands, he had insisted on having a visit from the doctor. This latter had therefore taken the journey; he had been charmed with the château, with his host, and with the small town of Baume, which, like every other place about, belonged to the Marquis, and lastly, the doctor had gone into raptures over a mineral spring on the outskirts of the little town. He

had returned to foggy London quite prepared to send his very next patient to drink the waters of Baume. Several patients did go, and were much the better for the remedy ; at least they were better, and they attributed their improved health to the waters, so that the worthy doctor settled in his own mind that he had discovered the elixir of life.

"Take your daughter to Baume, Mr. Dacre, you will see what that will do for her," he said enthusiastically.

"But is it safe ? I mean what will Napoleon be doing next ?"

"Napoleon ! Ah, my good sir, there is no fear of him for the next eight or ten years to come ; we are his dear friends at present—his most loved friends. Ah ! ah ! you should hear the Marquis talk of that hero, but you *will* hear him. I will give you a letter of introduction, and the trip will do you all the good in the world. Two or three months will serve your purpose, and you will easily find some one to put into your shoes in that damp parsonage of yours."

Mr. Dacre was not easily persuaded ; he was unwilling to undertake the journey, but as

Joyce became worse, the doctor at last gained his point, and the trip was decided upon. It was settled that Patience was to accompany them. Mrs. Dacre was very unwilling to stay at home, but she could not leave the baby, and, besides, Christopher wanted her, for he was going to look after the parish with the help of a neighbouring clergyman. This separation was a hard trial for the mother, for her life was bound up in that of her husband, and to her three months seemed an endless time; however, she was a brave woman, and looked cheerful, even at this moment of parting, though her heart was heavy and sad.

The travellers were to start this very evening, and Mrs. Dacre had herself seen to the packing. There were so many things poor Joyce would require, which no one but a mother would have thought of—a soft pillow, a soft rug, a soft shawl—and yet the girl had not spoken one word of thanks, nor had she noticed the tired look on that dear mother's face. Patience had done all that Joyce should have done, but then Patience was always thoughtful and good, just like her mother, only not so energetic nor so brave at heart.

"Look here, Joyce, suppose Boney eats you up! I heard old nurse telling Baby that if she didn't eat her porridge, Boney would come and eat her up." This was said by Jasper as an aside to Joyce, who, in spite of her fifteen years, could not stand a little teasing.

"Do get away from here, Jasper; how you do tease, and, besides, you shake me so much."

"Won't our Lady Joyce come back cured," continued the irrepressible Jasper; "her back will be straight, and her temper will be——." But at this point of the conversation Patience interfered, and whispered a few words in her brother's ear, to which he answered, "But really, Pat, Joyce does spoil everything, and now she will spoil my holiday by taking you and Father away."

"I am sure no one ever feels for me," began Joyce in her pitiful tone; "you are all strong and well, and can't understand what it is to be ill."

"There's Betty Barnes, Joyce, she is always ill, but she doesn't grumble and moan as you do," Jasper argued; "if you were a sailor!"

"Peace, my children," interposed Mr. Dacre,

who, though he had not caught the conversation, saw that something was amiss from the look on his daughter's face. "Our time together is but short, and we must make the most of it;" then turning to Edwin, he continued, "you will, I know, not grudge our sweet Patience to us; she goes as our counsellor—is it not so, Patience?" but the latter shook her head, smiling. "I will take all possible care of her," added Mr. Dacre, "and when we come back there will no longer be any need to wait for the wedding. Joyce will then be strong, and will take her sister's place, though we all know that none can make up fully for our Patience. In my absence Christopher will fill my post, and give you news of us and our doings—that is, if Patience does not do so herself; and ah, Christopher, you must be your mother's right hand, and make up to her for the loss of husband and children. Jasper will soon be afloat again, doing his duty; and Gabrielle, what shall we do without you, little one?"

"Take me to France, too," said the child, quickly.

"What! would you leave Mother?" and Mrs.

Dacre caught up her child as if some presentiment of coming evil had seized her. "No, no! there are enough of you going, my Baby must stay and comfort Mother; but oh, Martin, the time draws near—the carriage will soon be here to take you to the coast—will you not ask God to keep us all safe till we meet again?"

Mr. Dacre knelt down, and his family did the same; then, in a slow, impressive manner, but very simply, he commended them to God.

There was a low sob heard as the prayer ended, and for a few minutes all were quiet, but then the carriage drove up to take the travellers away, and a general confusion ensued, yet all strove to compose themselves. Christopher, though calm, looked pale as he held up the baby in his arms so that she might not be overlooked in the general bustle. Jasper alone could not see why so much fuss should be made about a three months' separation, till Patience remarked—

"Nay, but Jasper, we may all be dead in three months."

"What! has the plague broken out?"

"Well, it is useless trying to make you a thoughtful boy. Good-bye, dear Jasper,

and try when we meet again to be less of a tease."

"Good-bye, Father! good-bye, Patience! good-bye, Joyce!" so cried all the home birds, whilst the mother ran out once more for a last look at her husband and her sick darling.

"God bless you, my Joyce, and try and be a brave, patient girl;" and Joyce answered with her eyes blinded with tears,

"Mother, I will try."

She felt the parting very much, and for the first time she realised at this moment what a mother's love means, and how often she must have tried her mother's patience through all these long years. Thus they parted, "only for three months," said they; but although man proposes, it is God who disposes the events of every life.





## CHAPTER II.

### THE LITTLE TOWN OF BAUME.

**B**AUME was very unlike an English town. It was not less quiet, or less dull, or more aristocratic, but it was altogether different in aspect. It was situated on a hill ; that is, on one side of it there was a deep valley, at the bottom of which flowed a winding river, crossed by a steep, narrow bridge ; but on the other side of the town the ground sloped off gradually till it reached the border of a thick wood, which stretched far out into the distance. Baume was a very ancient town ; it had a market-place, an old convent, much damaged by the Revolution, two churches, also very dilapidated, and on the side near the wood might be seen the old château, where Monsieur le Marquis lived with his wife and his two children. Alas ! the old state and grandeur



had disappeared, but the outer shell was the same as in the ancient days, for it had resisted cannon and fire as well as the rage of the Republicans, and was now once more the home of the Marquis.

The famous springs, which had so much delighted the English doctor, were situated out of the town, and of course on the property of the Marquis, who had not quite the same faith in his mineral waters as the Englishman had, and rather smiled when he heard of English patients at Baume. The nobleman's family consisted, as I have said, of two children—Paul and Julie—who were pleasant, nicely brought-up children, though perhaps kept rather too strictly for our modern ideas.

It had been a source of much curiosity and excitement to these children when they had heard that an English family had arrived at Baume, and had settled themselves in a small house near the spring, which was known as "Maison Blanche." One morning, as Paul and Julie walked hand in hand up and down the terrace, they gave vent to their surmises.

"Do you think that English children are like us at all, Paul?" asked Julie; "you know that good English doctor Papa loves so much was very like any old French monsieur, perhaps knowing Papa made the difference."

"There is one old gentleman in 'Maison Blanche' and two young ladies. One is very young and looks ill; I heard Mademoiselle Pottin say so, Julie, and she always finds out all the news."

"There is seldom any news to find out here; all the news comes from the *Journal*. Ah, Paul, when you are a big man, you will be a Napoleon; you will go and conquer foreign lands like Alexander the Great, and——"

"What nonsense you talk, Julie; I shall go to the war, that is true, but it will be under Napoleon. Oh, that will be a glorious time! What a pity I am yet a boy! I would kiss Bonaparte's shadow; I would——"

"Fight the English, I hope," put in Julie, for she had imbibed the general hatred for that nation which had been for generations past the boast of the French.

The Marquis de Baume, unlike many of the

nobility of France, had taken up the cause of Bonaparte, heart and soul. Perhaps he had had enough experience of the evils of the democratic power, and was glad to have a strong hand over his unhappy country once more. Be this as it may, the Marquis and his children were thorough Bonapartists, but his wife could not cast off her old legitimist ideas, and would never give in to new notions.

"Do you know, Julie," said Paul, slowly, "I am tired of walking on this dull terrace; what do you say to walking along the road a little, just as far as *Maison Blanche*?"

"We should be scolded," said Julie, who thought more of the consequences than did her brother.

"Well, when I am scolded I shall be sorry, but for this once I will venture. As you are a girl you had better stay here, I know you are afraid."

"No, I am not, I will come too." So, looking back very often to see if they were noticed, the two children descended the terrace steps, passed the stiff gardens, and arriving at a little side gate, which opened

upon the highway, they at last found themselves running along the road towards the town, and before long were in sight of Maison Blanche. On they went till they reached the iron gate of the garden, and then, as her curiosity was greater than her fear, Julie actually paused and pressed her face against the bars in order to catch sight, if possible, of the new English people. Paul stood aside, as he did not wish to be seen prying, but he did not object to whispering every second,

"Do you see anything, Julie? Are they there? Don't let them see you, for what *would* Papa say?"

Julie had seen nothing, and was just about to give over peeping, when a hand was laid on her shoulder, which nearly made her scream with fright. She had not expected to be taken in the rear, and was quite unprepared.

"Ah! who is this little girl?" said Mr. Dacre's kind voice, forgetting that he could not be understood. Joyce was leaning on his arm, looking less pale than when we saw her last at Paston, but still delicate. Julie turned round and displayed a large pair of frightened

eyes, but was a little reassured at seeing Joyce.

"What do you want here?" asked Joyce, in not very good French.

"Paul and I wanted to see the English people; are you some of them?" Julie was much frightened after she had made the enquiry.

"Yes, we are English; and who are you?"

At this point in the conversation Paul came forward, and taking off his cap in a truly courtly fashion, began his apology—

"Mademoiselle and Monsieur, I must beg pardon for my sister, but we did not expect to be seen; we are the children of M. le Marquis de Baume, and if he hears of our adventure he will never pardon us."

"Well, well," said Mr. Dacre, beginning to laugh heartily, and now speaking in most correct French, "we are very glad to make your acquaintance, monsieur, and if you will do us the honour of entering our house, you will see we are not the wild beasts you took us for."

Paul blushed at this accusation, which was

so near the truth, but, declining the invitation, he took Julie's hand, and they went off as quickly as decorum allowed back to their own domain. In the meantime, Mr. Dacre and Joyce entered their abode, and found Patience in the sitting-room awaiting them. Joyce threw herself down upon a sofa, exclaiming—

“Oh this horrid French place! it is so hilly, and I am tired out, and the people are dirty, and——”

“That must be enough to make you miserable, so don't seek any more troubles, dear,” answered Patience; “see, I have made you some nice coffee after your walk. Father, did you find any letters at the Post-office?”

“Alas, no; my mind misgives me. I fear they must be lost, and it is a week since we last heard, but I bought a newspaper in the town, and we need be in no fear of becoming vain if we read all the abuse of the English therein published. However, we must not complain,” and Mr. Dacre smiled kindly. He was never heard to speak an unkind word of anyone.

“The French are a very rude people,” exclaimed Joyce, hotly, “we have been here a

long time now, and, in spite of that letter of introduction, the Marquis has never thought it worth his while to call upon us ; and fancy, Patience, we found his children at our own gate peeping, actually peeping in at us."

"Was it so ? In that case, the children of the Marquis are more anxious to see us than their father," and Patience laughed.

"The girl was about twelve years old, a pretty child, and the boy was a thorough little aristocrat."

"I hope old Jeanne has been behaving properly lately," said Mr. Dacre, after a pause. "I like not the attitude of these people towards us, and I almost wish we had not come, except—well, Joyce is really quite another creature ; you walked famously to-day."

"Yes, but I am very tired ; we shall be very glad when the time comes to go away. As for the doctor's promise of a cordial welcome at Baume, I do not see that it is at all realised ; why, to-day, Patience, some boys shouted names after us, and if Father had not been there I should have been quite frightened." The girl grumbled on, forgetting that it was entirely for her sake that her father and sister had left

home ; but in spite of this, she was improved in temper as well as in health.

The Dacres had tried to be friendly with the people around them, but whether they did not set about it in the right manner, or from other causes, they made but little way. Suspicious looks and low murmurs met them on every side, though as yet they had not been treated with actual rudeness. The servant they had engaged had a bad temper, and gave Patience, who was housekeeper, a great deal of trouble. The one cheering event of their present life was the arrival of letters from the dear ones at home. Mrs. Dacre's letters were a perfect feast of news ; she would recount every minute event which took place in the parish ; then Christopher would supplement this, and Edwin Payne sent many sheets to Patience. Some of the pages were, however, of a private character, and these were read by Patience in her own chamber, but the rest of the contents were chiefly political ; these were public property, and were the chief source of information about the outer world. The French journals were very untrustworthy, and the English papers sent to them had



a curious habit of never reaching their destination.

In order that my readers may understand the coming events of my story, I must pause a minute, and show in a few words what was the political aspect of England and France at this time.

The Peace of Amiens, in 1802, was followed in the August of the same year by the proclamation of Bonaparte as Consul for Life, and shortly after he received the power of nominating his successor. He now at once turned his attention in earnest to doing all he could for the internal prosperity of France, left torn and bleeding by the terrible years of revolution. Schools were established all over the country, commerce was encouraged, and Bonaparte looked especially to the navy. All these measures appeared pacific; Europe, and especially England, began to hope that the peace was to be lasting; but in his heart Bonaparte had no such intention. He soon began to pick a quarrel with England concerning the treaty, for he felt that though a great part of Europe was under his control, yet that England still defied him. He

doubted not that in time he would accomplish the humiliation of that proud island, but at present, though he liked to heap petty insults upon her, he wished to remain at peace till his plans should be well matured.

Bonaparte had not much difficulty in finding causes of offence. A large party of French Royalists were now in England; they had declined to return to France, and spent their energies in writing against the Consul and against everything he did. Instead of passing this over in silence, Bonaparte was much offended, and begged the English Government to put a stop to the very uncomplimentary language used against him by the emigrants, although the great man did not mind returning the insults through the medium of his official paper, the *Moniteur*. England tried to make Bonaparte understand that, being a free country, it did not control its press; but, to show as much consideration as possible for the feelings of the First Consul, Peltier, the chief aggressor in the paper war, was had up before a court to be tried for libel, and was found guilty. This, however, did not satisfy Bona-

parte, and the *Moniteur* continued its articles against England.

The next quarrel was about the treaty itself. France complained that England had not fulfilled the conditions of peace. Some settlements, and, above all, the island of Malta, were still in the possession of the English ; and the excuse they gave was that France had not left off acquiring territory, and that, therefore, they were not bound to give up all their possessions. However, rather than incur another war, the English Government was about to relinquish Malta, when an article appeared in the *Moniteur* so insulting to the British flag, that the old Lion woke up and asked what France meant by it, adding, that now Malta should not be evacuated till a full and satisfactory apology had been received.

All these last aggressions had occurred since the Dacres left home, though they had heard no authenticated reports about them, and it was owing to these troubles that the Marquis had not hastened to hold out the hand of fellowship to the English visitors. It would never do if he, a supporter of the First Consul, should be known to be in close relationship

with some of these hated foreigners ; might they not be spies in disguise, and might they not get him into trouble with his party ? So, in spite of the introduction from his friend the doctor, the Marquis meant to see as little as possible of the new-comers.

In the next chapter we shall learn how the unforeseen events which followed greatly altered the plans of our English friends.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE FIRST ALARM.

IT was a bright spring morning, and the sun shone out with wonderful splendour, causing all Nature to rejoice. Down by the river at Baume the bargemen and women of the town were setting to work in earnest, as they sang their loud musical songs, which still smacked of the Red Republican, so lately in fashion. The washerwomen, as they beat their linen with small wooden spades, now and then joined in the chorus, or exchanged jokes in their broad *patois*, scarcely to be understood by polite ears. The deep-toned convent bell tolled out some service hour, unheeded by the merry chatterers on the market-place, who were buying and selling, and paying away many words, if not much coin.

The beginning of May, 1803, gave no

ing of the impending storm to the bitants of Maison Blanche, who, though ous about the non-arrival of their letters, it down only to some accidental delay. e was far stronger ; she could enjoy her s, and there was a little colour in her erly pale cheeks.

Father ! Patience ! actually I see the age of the Marquis coming here," cried e, on this bright morning ; "at last he is g to be civil, just as we are thinking of g away ;" and before the motives of the quis could be discussed, that gentleman shown into the room. Mr. Dacre returned alutation graciously, in spite of the small ness he had received at his hands, and followed the usual compliments. Presently onversation turned upon politics, and the quis enquired at the end whether Mr. e were soon about to return to England ?

Yes, we are only awaiting letters from e to settle our day ; about the middle his month we hope to be on the road. ar that our Government has not found h favour with the First Consul lately, but things are mending ; my little Joyce is

---

quite a politician already, and gives us her views very decidedly."

Joyce blushed, and was glad that the Marquis politely waived the subject of politics by asking if Mademoiselle had recovered her health, although she would somewhat have liked to give her opinion of Bonaparte, which was not a flattering one at all. Happily Patience was next addressed.

"Some time since, Mademoiselle, my children, I fear, committed the grave indiscretion of peeping through your railings. I must apologise for their rudeness, and you will be glad to hear that they have not been allowed to walk out of the grounds since that time; some day Paul and Julie shall come and beg pardon."

"We were so glad to see them," Patience hastened to say; "we have had so few acquaintances, and children are always a pleasure to us. I do hope, Monsieur, they will not be further punished."

Mr. Dacre added, laughing—"They wished to see if we were human beings, or like wild beasts."

But the Marquis was not to be appeased.

"They had no excuse; I only hope that their punishment will make them remember in future that an act of incivility degrades a nobleman."

Very soon after this the stern man rose to go; he had not unbent at all, and had only performed an unwilling duty by coming to "Maison Blanche." The Dacres had not the clue to his conduct, and Joyce, as usual, was inclined to judge him harshly.

"Well, although we English people are said to be proud and cold, yet had strangers settled near us, we should have showed them more courteous consideration. Then see how unkind he is to his children!"

"My dear Joyce, we should never judge our neighbours, unless we were acquainted with all their motives, and this, you know, is impossible, if we look to ourselves——" But Joyce had already escaped into the garden, for fear of being found fault with.

"Dear Joyce is really a different creature," remarked Patience; "we have that comfort, though our stay has not been very lively. She is losing much of the fretfulness which used to be so constant. How dear Mother will rejoice;



she always said that Joyce——” This wise speech was interrupted by Joyce herself, who came running into the room, flourishing a letter in her hand.

“It is for you, Patience, from Edwin Payne; and look, sister, what a long time it has been on the road; our Paston letters must be lost altogether, but perhaps Edwin will give us all the news. Ah! how I long to be there again, and to give Mother a good hug! But quick, Patience, leave out all the pretty speeches, and let us hear the really important part.”

Patience did as she was bid, promising herself a feast over the “pretty speeches” when quite alone, and began—

“There is much stir now about French affairs; things are looking very serious, and from the private information I get from my Lord Hawkesbury, I fear the Consul may push matters too far for his own good and ours. There have been stormy interviews in Paris between the Consul and my Lord Whitworth, so that on the whole, after careful consideration, I advise you, on receipt of this letter, to find out as far as possible what is the opinion which prevails in France, and

to form your own plans accordingly. If Joyce can travel, I would not delay more than three weeks, for, though it is most unlikely that matters will come to a crisis, yet it were not well to trust to this improbability. Should war be declared, you would have to travel faster than might be suitable, though of course time would be given to peaceable travellers to quit the unfriendly soil. I am all the more disquieted from what you say of the behaviour of the Marquis, who is known to be a supporter of the Consul, and the English are in no good odour in France. I do not wish to alarm you unnecessarily, but I strongly advise immediate return. All are well at Paston, and you must know, my precious heart——” Patience pulled up all at once, blushing; she had quite forgotten her audience.

“What do you think, Father? Edwin is anxious; had we not better think of our departure, as it is three weeks already since he wrote this?”

“Certainly,” said Mr. Dacre, looking grave; “matters have been kept close here, but I feel I have been remiss lately about reading the papers; one sickens of these continual hard

words and this unchristian language. You had better begin at once preparing for our departure, and to-morrow I will see about it."

"I fear we shall not see that nice little Paul again," said Joyce, "but the bare thought of home makes me feel quite strong," and so saying, the happy girl tripped about after Patience, helping to pack up.

When Joyce awoke the next morning, her first thought was that they were going home, her second that she was a little sorry to leave the quaint old town, its pretty walks, its picturesque river, and its healthy, dry, keen air. This happy frame of mind was all too soon put a stop to by the entrance of Patience with a pale, frightened face.

"Oh, Joyce, dear, what shall we do? Oh dear! oh dear!" and the girl sank into a chair sobbing. Joyce ran towards her hastily.

"What is the matter, Patience? Quick, tell me, and please don't cry; you have often told me that tears mend nothing."

"Dear Father looks so ill; he can hardly speak; and where shall we find a doctor?"

Just as we were going home too." And then Patience, little accustomed to responsibility, cried still more. Joyce was silent a minute, then, trying not to show her own bitter disappointment, she said, "I will run to the town and find a doctor. Come, Patience, cheer up; shall I go and see Father first?"

Nothing had ever before called out the latent energy of Joyce's character, only the loving, far-sighted eye of her mother had discerned, beneath the crust of selfishness caused by ill-health, all the real strength of the girl's nature.

"I don't see how you can go, Joyce; you will be tired, and perhaps get ill too."

"No, no; you know that we cannot trust Jeanne." Then she went into her father's room, and saw that he was indeed very ill, for he seemed almost unconscious, and moaning as if in pain; she hesitated no longer, and opening the garden gate, took the road leading to the town. She had never before walked without her father's strong supporting arm, and now the tears stood in her eyes as she thought of him lying helpless and ill in this foreign land.

"If only Mother were here," she said to herself, but the kind mother was far away, and could not know how much her children wanted her. It did not take her very long to reach the town; she passed under the old gateway leading into the narrow, crooked streets; the morning light illuminated one side of the street, showing up all the signs of age and decay which time had imprinted on the weather-beaten *façades* of the houses. The pigeon roofs, the overhanging stories, the narrow doorways, made of great blocks of stone hewn into arch-shape, and glimpses of the wood-encased rooms, presented themselves to Joyce's eyes; for the people of Baume were early folks, and were already eating their morning soup on their door-sills, out of little earthenware pipkins. Near the market-place was a chemist's shop, and there it was that Joyce repaired to ask the owner if he knew the name of a good doctor, and where he might be found.

"Good morning, Mademoiselle," said the little man, making a polite bow, for he was one of the few men in the town who did not look with lowering brows upon the strangers,

"I am glad to see you out so early. What can I do for you?"

"If you would tell me, Monsieur, where I could find a doctor; we were just going away from Baume, when this morning my father fell ill, very ill. What shall we do? for it is a long way to England."

The chemist had a copy of the *Moniteur* under his thumb, and at the mention of England all his small person seemed to dilate. He drew himself up and said—

"Ah, Mademoiselle, England is *not* so far off as you think; look at the Consul, what does he say? But I was forgetting; England is your country, and you were asking about a doctor."

"Yes," said Joyce, impatiently, thinking the chemist very tiresome for not attending more to her question.

"Well, I will tell you; you must go to Monsieur le Docteur Chénier, he lives in a house near the river; anyone will direct you to him. Tell him you are recommended by me, and don't begin talking of politics."

"I am sure *I* don't want to do so," answered Joyce, as she went out of the shop. She was

feeling very weary from haste and excitement, and now, thinking of her further walk, she felt inclined to cry, but she forced back the tears, and bravely descended one of the hilly streets which led to the river. After a weary walk she reached the water-side, and then enquired of a bargeman if he knew the house of Doctor Chénier. Her accent was not to be mistaken, and she heard some rough-looking men behind her murmur that here was the English girl—a spy, and one of the enemies of the Republic. Joyce pretended not to hear, although the murmur grew louder, and as the man she had addressed answered her in a surly voice, she hurried on, and with trembling fingers knocked at the door.

The doctor was just coming out, so he opened the door himself, and was much surprised at seeing the pale face of the English girl.

“Whom have we here? Why, you must be the English demoiselle! What do you want, my child?” The tone was reassuring, although the doctor’s face was like a gutta-percha ball which was pressed in and out at pleasure; his nose nearly met his chin, only the space between was filled up by a thick moustache;

his small, bright eyes were overshadowed by immense eyebrows, and his hair hung in thick short curls over his low forehead.

"Yes, I am Miss Dacre; we were going away this very day, but my father fell ill this morning, and if you are a doctor, you must please come to see him."

"*Must*," growled the doctor, "and don't you know the English are not loved in this country?"

"I have reason to know it, for the people in the town look angrily at us as we pass; to-day, especially, by the river the men frightened me. But, Monsieur, come to my father. Surely you will not let the ignorance——"

"Of course I will come; you see a doctor has no countrymen—all who need him are his friends—but I am truly sorry that your father is ill. I will come at once, and the men will say nothing if I am with you; they know me, and, to say the truth, they are very civil to me, because they can't do without me. But you look pale; wait a moment, and I will give you a glass of wine."

"No, no; I am not ill at all. I mean, please don't let us wait; my sister is all alone," and



in her eagerness she started off, but was recalled by the doctor.

"Gently, gently, you will tire yourself out, and my legs are not so young as they were. See, we will go up this narrow street and avoid the bargemen," and so saying he led the way up a small ill-paved street, whose houses on each side seemed to bend over and almost shake hands. The ascent was so steep that Joyce was fain to go slowly; she now felt considerably comforted by the kindness of the odd little doctor. After all, things might not be so bad; her father might recover in a day or two, and then they would go home. Joyce was beginning to be quite nervous; the sour looks on every side frightened her.

"Look you, my child," said the doctor presently, as he puffed and panted by her side, "have you read the papers to-day?"

"Oh no; why should I?" she said, wondering at the question.

"It is a great pity that you are here; things are coming to a crisis; the glorious Republic will rival ancient Rome; she will go on and conquer; she will have but to look, and the whole world will fall before her, it will kiss

t, it will beg for protection, it will——” of breath prevented the sentence having appropriate termination.

am very glad,” said Joyce, not wishing to her new friend. “I hope the Republic will to govern the countries she conquers.”

Now! Do you doubt it? When the the perfidious Albion has knelt before e will——” And in his excitement the tripped over a loose stone, and found stretched full length upon republican Joyce could not refrain from smiling, before the doctor had picked himself that he did not see her, but he was not discomfited.

have shown you how the enemies of will fall before her; now we are on round, so we can go faster.” A short after, the pair stood before “Maison e,” and the doctor lost no time in going the sick man, and Patience left them er and came down stairs.

did seem long till you came, Joyce. ired you look! Suppose you should too!” and Patience looked so woefully ble that Joyce smiled.

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"I promise I will take care of myself; but, Patience, do you think Father is very ill? I wish we could get away quickly. Everybody speaks of the news in the papers; just suppose, if there should be war?"

"They would let us have time to get home, I hope. Anyhow, we cannot start to-day, and surely Edwin would have written again and urged our departure if it had been needful. I am not anxious about that, only about Father."

Joyce shook her head.

"You did not see the faces of the townspeople to-day; the bargemen made me tremble. If the doctor had not come back with me I should have been much frightened. I could not help thinking of those dreadful Red Republicans. Suppose there should be another revolution?"

"What nonsense you are talking. I shall go up now and see that funny little doctor."

"Nevertheless," thought Joyce, "Patience did *not* see the angry faces of the men, so she cannot judge as well as I can."

It was well for Joyce that she now felt herself of some use—it prevented her from

brooding over her own feelings; and for the first time in her life, she had a conviction that she had a place to fill in the world, and that God expected that the talents He had bestowed upon her should not lie hid in a napkin.





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE KNIGHT'S WARNING.

**P**AUL and Julie, as we have seen, had been discovered, as was likely they would be, for when the young lady's governess had gone out to find her pupil, nowhere could she be seen. Never dreaming that the brother and sister had taken the unheard-of step of going alone on the road, it was sometime before Mademoiselle Fermaut had thought of looking out of the park gate and down the road. Then she espied the truants, who were slinking homewards—Julie pale with fright, but Paul holding his head high, and braving her stern looks.

“You are the very naughtiest children the world has ever seen. If Paul had gone alone, that would have been a great crime; but for you, Julie, a young lady brought up by *me*—

oh, that is too dreadful! Tell me where you have been?"

"We have not committed any sin, Mademoiselle," said Paul, defiantly. "We wanted to see the English people who are living at 'Maison Blanche,' and fancy, we found them very like other people, only they talked funnily." Paul gave this gratuitous information in the hopes of appeasing the angry lady, but this ruse did not succeed.

"And I should like to know what *they* thought of *you*! Come both of you to Madame, and see what she will say." Julie began to cry, but Paul was only hardened.

The Marquise was a tall, gaunt-looking lady, whose many troubles had not rendered her character softer; on the contrary, they had hardened her naturally stern disposition, and had left her a sad, careworn woman; she certainly loved her children, but she had seen so much evil arising from self-will that she had but small pity on faults of that nature exhibited by her children. It was no empty threat to be taken to "Madame."

We have seen what was the punishment of the brother and sister, and besides the

restriction of their walks, they had various extra tasks set them to learn. The children were therefore in no danger of forgetting the English people, and they were continually talking about the kind old man and pretty girls. One day Paul was told he was to go soon and beg pardon for his misdemeanour: he felt a secret satisfaction at this part of the punishment, and did not reproach Julie for her peeping, as he had often done before. A few days went by, and he heard no more about going to "Madame Blanche," but instead of this he noticed his parents were very anxious, and that their conversation turned always upon the war in England.

"I can't tell you how sorry I am that the English people are still here," Paul heard his father saying one afternoon; "it will look bad if they do not go soon; indeed, when the Consul declares war—and this private letter leaves no doubt in my mind about his intentions—they must go. What an unfortunate illness that was. I met Doctor Chénier to-day in the town, and he says that Mr. Dacre will not be fit to move before the 18th of

month, four days to come yet. It is most unlucky."

"If the Consul does not trust you," returned his wife, coldly, "he had better find other supporters. On the subject of Bonaparte the husband and wife never agreed; they had tacitly settled not to discuss the matter, only now and then the Marquise forgot her resolution. Paul was not supposed to understand these remarks, nevertheless he did so perfectly, and told Julie in confidence that Papa said the English gentleman was ill, and it was a great pity he had not gone away, as most likely there was going to be war with England. "Oh, Julie," he added, "what a pity I am not a man! I should look so fine in my uniform and my General's hat; then Mamma would not scold me, and Papa would not give me such hard lessons to learn, and you—well, you might buckle on my sword; the ancient knights always had ladies to fasten their gear; people would talk of you as the sister of the great Paul!"

Julie tossed her head; she did not see why Paul was to have all the glory, so she turned the conversation.



"Do you know, Paul, when I was walking with Mademoiselle the other day, we actually went into the town; she loves going there herself, though she says it is wrong of me to wish to go. Well, on our way back we passed "*Maison Blanche*," and I saw the pale-faced English girl picking flowers, and she nodded to me, and laughed. Oh, she was so pretty!"

"Very well, Julie, if you think she is pretty, she shall be my Lady; all the old knights had ladies, and they did great deeds for them, and wore a badge. What can I wear, Julie?"

"But the pale girl will go back to England, and you will never see your Lady."

"That is of no consequence; you shall see, Julie, that I shall be quite content to fight for her. Quick, get me my sword, and buckle it on, and I will wear violets in her honour; there are always violets in the kitchen garden."

The ceremony was gone through with much gravity; the new knight, for want of some one better, made Julie dub him; after which followed a tournament, but in the midst of the play Mademoiselle Fermaut called them in to

drink their bread and milk before going to bed. The knight was not disconcerted, and told the governess that he was going to watch his sword, and did not want any milk, as he was obliged to fast; which self-denial he was, however, not allowed to practise.

This was all child's play, but Paul was much in earnest. He kept his eyes open, and in a few days an event took place which fired the devotion of the new knight and his sister.

It was a warm spring May day; the birds were singing their songs and giving praise to their Maker; spring flowers lifted their beautiful heads, seeming to be listening to the lively sounds of earth in which they might not join. The château looked less gloomy than it had done for months, and beyond, in the distance, the forest was bursting into leaf; but, though Nature smiled and laughed over the coming summer, M. le Marquis, the owner of all this property, was not at all happy as he walked up and down his terrace with several letters in his hands; his brows were knit in deep thought, and now and then he uttered an impatient "Pshaw!"

Soon his wife joined him, and with her came the two children, who stayed near their mother, not yet being trusted alone again. Paul had a large bunch of violets placed in his round straw hat, which made Mademoiselle Fermaut wonder what had come to the boy that he was always picking violets. This was the conversation that Paul heard—

“The news is perfectly true. It is just as I expected: those English have not gone, and war is declared. The First Consul is furious against England. Those low shopkeepers have seized our ships in port and——”

“And what?” asked the Marquise, whilst Paul raised himself on tiptoe to hear the answer.

“Why, Napoleon says he will not let one of those hated English return to their country, and there is that tiresome family on my very estate.”

“So that is what your Consul does; he means to catch those poor people like mice in a trap!”

“They might act as spies if he did not do so, but I am much annoyed that this should have happened.”

"But you will warn them, of course; there may still be a chance of escape."

"What is the use? The orders will come from Paris this evening; nay, they may be come at this very minute, for aught I know; besides, what would be said of me if it were known that I had helped the English to escape? Really, Madame, I think I am very hardly used. Did I ask these people to come here and drink of my spring? did I ask them to stay all this time? did I encourage them?"

"Certainly not."

"And yet I find myself placed in a most awkward position. As the trusted friend of the Consul, I am made acquainted with his affairs, and these affairs happen to relate to people who came here for their pleasure, sent here by a good foolish old doctor; and because I repay a debt of gratitude to one Englishman, am I for that reason to be made answerable for the welfare of all his countrymen?" and the Marquis, angry with fate, himself, and especially the English visitors, evinced his wrath by hitting with his stick the few loose pebbles on the gravel. The Marquise knew that it was useless to argue with her husband,

so in silence she retired indoors. Only at this moment did the Marquis notice his son, who had drunk in every word of the conversation, but did not betray his knowledge.

"Well, Paul, why are you not playing with your sister?"

"Well, you see, when I want to speak privately with her, Mademoiselle Fermant listens to our conversation; I think it is not at all honourable of her." In spite of his troubles the Marquis laughed.

"There is Julie in the garden; go and have your private conversation, and you may tell Mademoiselle that I want her."

Paul ran off, glad of this opportunity.

"Julie, I have a great secret to tell you; promise not to talk about it to anyone. Promise. You must put your hand on my sword and say, 'My brother, I promise not to open my lips about what you are going to tell me.'"

"Well, well, I promise," broke in Julie; "*you* have not always kept your promises, you know, Paul. Don't you remember——"

"Bah! I was not a knight then, that makes all the difference, so listen. The time has

come when I can really do some good to my Lady. I heard Papa say that the Consul was going to take all the English and make them prisoners. Mamma said something about warning the English here, but Papa said it was no use."

"Well, what has that to do with you?"

"I am coming to that in a minute. You see Papa is afraid, but I am not afraid at all. I shall go and warn them of their danger this very evening."

"Oh! you will be scolded."

"I have not been forbidden to go to Maison Blanche, and now, you see, I must go."

At "Maison Blanche" this same day there had been great preparations going on; Patience had done all the packing, whilst Joyce had sat near her father, who, though far from recovered, was yet considered well enough to be moved. Indeed Baume was getting very unpleasant for the English people, and Joyce had never again dared to venture into the town alone; the girls had sent old Jeanne to buy all the necessities of life. They had received no more letters, but Patience had written both to her mother and

to Edwin telling them of her father's illness and of their speedy return.

Joyce ran out towards evening to get a breath of fresh air; she wished to take a last look at the old château in the grey light of evening, and at the forest, over which a streak of crimson still lingered, sole remains of the beautiful sunset.

"The last time I shall see you, you old castle, by this quiet evening light," thought Joyce, "but nothing can be as beautiful as our dear home at Paston," and she sang in a low, soft voice, "Home, sweet home; there is no place like home."

"Mademoiselle?"

Joyce started. The youthful voice came from the gate; she hastened to open it, and saw Paul before her.

"How do you do?" said Joyce, too much surprised to say anything more original.

"Mademoiselle, I have come through many perils to tell you that you are in great danger, and that you must fly to-night. Since war has been declared, the English are not safe. I heard Papa say so, so it must be true."

"We are going to-morrow," said Joyce,

turning pale; "we could not go before, because of my father's illness. Surely we shall be allowed to pass! What good would it be to keep us?"

Paul shook his head; he did not understand the ins and outs of the question, but he knew he must get home.

"I must go, but please remember I warned you. I am your knight, and please, Mademoiselle, will you tell me your name."

Joyce could not help smiling at this diminutive knight, whose small cap rested on the back of his curly head, and on it was pinned a bunch of violets. His right hand was placed on his toy sword, and his whole bearing was imposing.

"You are very good to trouble yourself about me. My name is Joyce Dacre. Now you must come into the house."

"No," said the knight; "I have done my duty, so I must get home;" but before going, he took the violets out of his cap and presented them to Joyce. After this he ran off in the direction of the Castle, looking more like the truant that he was, than the knight he wished to be, *sans peur et sans reproche*.



Joyce considered a few moments whether she should go in and tell her father and Patience, for the boy's information might be correct; but then, what could they do? They could not fly, for their father was only just able to walk. That war was declared they had heard two days since, but Mr. Dacre had never doubted that they should be able to pass through the country to the coast. On the whole, Joyce thought it best to say nothing before her father, but to wait till she could tell Patience alone the strange news of the strange knight.





## CHAPTER V.

### JOYCE OPENS THE DOOR.

**A**ND what was the true state of the matter ? Whilst the news had slowly reached quiet Baume, there had been no delay in transmission between London and Paris. Immense excitement was created by the declaration of war. Lord Whitworth, the English ambassador at Paris, demanded his passports on the 12th of May, and six days after, the French Ambassador left London. The English began hostilities by seizing two French vessels in the bay of Audierne, and this act, though the usual custom in war time, had put Bonaparte in a passion, and he determined to take a speedy revenge.

It was the night of the 21st of May. The Tuileries were at last left in darkness, only the moon shone down upon the stately buildings,

shedding a peaceful light over them, as if in mockery of the tumult of thought which was to be found within its walls in the bosom of the great Napoleon. In a small room, simply furnished, and lighted only by a single lamp, he might now be seen, with folded arms and head sunk on his chest, pacing up and down the narrow limits of his chamber. Upon a table near a curtained window lay many outspread letters and papers which he had been perusing. Presently he went to the bell and pulled it violently, whereupon a valet appeared, looking as if he would have preferred his bed to his duty of watcher.

"Has the General not yet arrived?" asked the master.

"No, sire, but the porter is warned, and will let him in at once," and at this minute Junot himself entered hastily. There was no greeting or waste of words between the two men. When the servant had shut the door, Bonaparte walked quickly to the table, and, taking up some papers, put them into Junot's hands.

"See, Junot, read that, and tell me what you think."

The Governor of Paris obeyed in silence, closely watched by the Consul; presently Junot looked up, and beheld the flashing eyes and the small figure, which could look so commanding, almost trembling with excitement. Bonaparte saw the look of dismay on Junot's face, but appeared to take no notice of it; his own was almost transformed by the expression of hate imprinted on it.

"Junot, you must, before an hour elapses, take measures so that all the English, without one single exception, shall be arrested; the 'Temple,' the 'Force,' and the 'Abbaye' will hold them; they must be seized." And so saying, Napoleon struck the small table with his fist. "The measure," he continued, "must be carried out at seven to-morrow evening; after that time there must not be one free Englishman in France."

"My General," replied Junot, who had had time to recover from his surprise, "you know not only my attachment to your person, but my absolute devotion to everything which concerns you; it is that devotion which induces me to hesitate in obeying your orders, and to implore you to take a few hours to

reflect on the measure which you have now commanded."

Napoleon frowned.

"Are we to have another scene, Junot? I will show you I am not to be preached at. Do not trust too far to my friendship; from the moment that I conceive doubts as to yours, mine is gone."

"My General, am I not giving you the strongest proofs of my friendship at this moment? Demand my blood, demand my life; I shall surrender them without hesitation; but to ask a thing which must cover us with——"

"Go on," cried Napoleon; "what is likely to happen to me because I fling back on a faithless Government the insults it has offered me?"

"It is not my part to decide on the conduct you should pursue. I am sure that when you come to yourself——"


"The English will have found out I am not to be trifled with. Junot, you have but to obey. By the way, here is a special notice to be sent to the Marquis de Baume; he has had some leanings toward that detestable race, and

ill remind him of his duty, if by chance any friends from false Albion staying in him." Napoleon laughed a little, not as were pleased, but as if he felt it a relief to see the English. After a moment's pause he added, "Well, good-night, Junot; if you do not retire soon, it will have to be good night—and remember." Without another word the Governor of Paris retired with a sad heart and anxious brow.

As these despatches that had so much affected our Marquis on the succeeding day, were this same piece of news which had been taken to Joyce.

Dacre was in the sitting-room when his eldest daughter re-entered; he was reading *Moniteur*, and looked anxious and thoughtful.

"Seven children," he said, "we have indeed cause to sorrow for our unhappy country, for the miseries of this land which has long been steeped in war. Far better might it be if, like David of old, we might receive our punishment, and fall into the hands of our enemies rather than into the hands of cruel tyrants. We shall indeed have cause to rejoice



when we find ourselves once more in our own land; if our country is invaded, we shall at least suffer with our friends." There was a great alteration visible in Mr. Dacre; his illness had been severe, and though he had settled to go, he was as yet hardly fit to travel. He did not dream of any personal danger, but he feared to delay on account of the difficulty of finding an English ship to convey them home. Her father's composure somewhat quieted Joyce, so she settled to say nothing to Patience about her interview with Paul. All their trunks stood ready packed, and nothing remained to be done the next morning, for they were to start early. Presently old Jeanne brought in their supper; she looked a little less grim than usual, whether from pleasure or sorrow at their departure the travellers did not know.

"It does seem a long time since we received one word from England," said Patience, during the meal; "I feel sure, Father, the letters have been stopped. I do hope no one read Edwin's letters—I do grudge them a little; but then, I shall get him to tell me all that was in them."

"It is through me, my children, that you are not yet at home, surrounded by those you love ; but my illness was from the hand of God, and we know His ways are best and wisest."

"Now, dear Father, as it is nine o'clock, don't you think you had better come to bed, so as to have as much rest as possible before your journey, and Joyce had better do the same," said Patience.

"Yes, and before we separate, let us as usual thank God for all His mercies."

Hardly had the three finished the evening prayers, when a loud knocking was heard at the outer door, and old Jeanne ran into the room looking dreadfully frightened.

"Ah, Monsieur, what can be the matter ? Who can be coming here at this hour of the night ? I dare not open."

"What nonsense !" cried Joyce. "I am not afraid ; I will go and open the door." She said this in order if possible to spare her father, for now Paul's warning was confirmed, and Joyce felt all her limbs trembling as she went to the door, where the knocking was every minute becoming louder and more furious. With trembling fingers she drew the bolts ;



it was a dark night, for the sky was overcast, and the moon had not yet risen ; but as Joyce opened the door, the bright light of a large lantern flashed over her, and showed her a party of five or six men, several of whom were soldiers, and the rest wore the dress of officials.

“Does the English Monsieur Dacre and his daughters live here?” said the chief of the party, looking rather surprised at beholding the young lady instead of a servant.

“Yes, my father is here now, but we are all going away to-morrow, and as he is ill, I must beg of you not to disturb him, sirs.” If Joyce had been afraid of the sour looks of the barge-men, she was now far more dismayed at the air of insolence of her present interrogator.

“Our orders cannot be disobeyed. Here, Mademoiselle, you can see for yourself : this is an order to seize the persons of the Englishman and his daughters.”

“Oh, it cannot be!” cried Joyce, her own fear for the moment vanishing at the thought of her father ; “what have we done ? Indeed my father has been ill ; go back, Monsieurs, and ask if there is not some mistake. You would never take him out of the house this

cold evening ; take me as substitute, if you do not believe me, but leave him in peace. I know it is a mistake. We have nothing to do with the war."

The official seemed touched for a moment with the young girl's distress, but, naturally, he was not to be deterred from doing his duty.

"We are wasting words, Mademoiselle ; the orders have come direct from Paris. Pardon me," and so saying, he pushed her gently aside, but Joyce sprang like a wild animal away from the men and darted towards her father. The old man had risen from his seat on hearing the noise, and, leaning on the arm of his eldest daughter, was now looking round him, much bewildered. Joyce threw her arms round his neck, and said in a trembling voice—

"Oh, dear Father, they are coming to take you to prison. It is an order from Paris ; it is cruel, cruel, and you who are so ill. Patience, don't let them take him." But Patience could not say a word ; she was quite dazed.

"Come, we cannot spend the night here ; we have a carriage outside, and you would oblige us by delaying as little as possible."

Joyce now saw resistance was vain. With wonderful presence of mind she left her father and ran upstairs to fetch his warm coat, and as many wraps as she could carry for her sister and herself. Mr. Dacre had hardly spoken, but when he realised what was required of him, he murmured—

“My children, it is God’s will ; we must not complain.” Then all three got into the carriage prepared for them, the chief officer entering with them, after which he gave the signal, and the procession moved off slowly towards the town.

“Where are you taking us ?” asked Joyce.

Their companion paused a moment, then he said—

“To the town prison ; such are our orders for to-night ; to-morrow you will be examined.”

Patience uttered a little cry and then burst into tears, but Joyce only trembled as she clung more lovingly to her father.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE INSIDE OF A PRISON.

THE news that ten thousand of their fellow-countrymen were detained in a foreign land, and by a tyrant's command, fell like a thunderbolt on England. No words could express the general indignation against Bonaparte; the many families who were deprived of their dear ones cried shame upon the deed and the doer, and many were the letters written by despairing wives, mothers, and kinsfolk to the First Consul. The only answer that could be extracted from him was, that they must ask their own Government, for the fate of the prisoners rested with that body. Napoleon hoped that the English would accede to his terms, or *said* he hoped this, but the spirit of war was strong within him, and for months he had been preparing for an invasion of England;

nevertheless it seems certain that he had not intended to begin at once, and it was the pertinacity of the English that had brought matters to a crisis. Now, however, the Consul determined to spare no pains, and gigantic preparations, chiefly by sea, were set on foot. But what mattered all this to those unfortunates, who, taken by surprise, found themselves, without any warning, thrust into prison—what indeed?

The buildings which were used at Baume for the local prisoners were situated on the edge of the hill, and were partly built upon the old wall, which towered above the valley. The prison was a low building, with narrow windows, originally meant for loopholes, through which the garrison could command the valley beneath in case of an assaulting enemy appearing, which enemy had often, in old feudal times, crept up the hill under cover of the darkness, and had succeeded in reaching the walls, and then ensued a struggle, in which strength and dexterity won the day. Either the enemy must be hurled backward from the ramparts into the valley below, or the besieged must himself find a grave beneath his city's walls, and

be trampled to death by his own comrades, who, passing on from behind, saw nothing but the foe.

The present prison had been made out of the ruins of the ancient castle, and had seen many dreadful things in the time of the Revolution—dreadful because the innocent were suffering for the guilty; and now once again it had opened its gates to receive victims no less unfortunate and guiltless. Perhaps it was well that the Dacres were escorted to their gloomy abode at night, for the contrast to *Maison Blanche* was less discernible. They were conducted along low, dark passages, whose floors were the natural rock, and which, in the midday light, were not over light. At last the officer opened a door, and showed the Dacres into a small square room, in which stood a table and two chairs. The officer put down the lantern and said, "*Voilà, Monsieur,*" as if he were glad his part of the work were over, then passing through another door he pointed to two small chambers, meant for the sleeping apartments of the prisoners.

"There is plenty of room, *Monsieur*, you see. You have nearly the whole place to

yourself; the turnkey will bring you supper, and to-morrow you will be examined." The officer then departed, leaving the three alone.

Mr. Dacre seated himself on a chair, quite spent with the sudden night journey, and Patience clung to him, still sobbing. Joyce alone was calm; she was young, and though frightened, a touch of romance mingled with her fears. The young have often this feeling: they cannot believe that anything really dreadful will happen, and there is always in their imagination some loophole of escape from every danger. Mr. Dacre spoke first.

"Patience, my daughter, you must console yourself; this can only be a mistake; it will but delay our journey a few days. The officials have but to write to England, and they will find out at once that we are peaceable people."

"It is not a mistake," said Joyce, and then she related what Paul had told her; "but, as we cannot do anything to-night, had you not better lie down, Father?"

Mr. Dacre smiled. "Yes, you are right; and have we not been praying this very

that God's will may be done on earth.  
His must be His will, so let us not

At the moment the key of their door was turned, a jailor entered, bringing with him the best repast for the new-comers. He was stupid, but not too stupid to be able to satisfy some curiosity about the inmates of

He started forward. At all events, he might know something.

"How long are we to stay here, Monsieur?" he asked, imploringly. "My father has said that this dreadful place will kill him."

"I am sure I don't know, Mam'sell. Let me see. He had ordered me to clean up these rooms this morning, and now to bring in this food, but he had not said for how long you were to be

He let the jailor depart without further saying; evidently he knew nothing about the matter. Mr. Dacre retired to one of the rooms, but the sisters were too excited to get any rest, and sat with their arms round each other, trying to find comfort in words.

"He had never come here," sighed Joyce,



"all this would never have happened. I shall always feel that it was my fault, and Mother will never forgive me. Perhaps this is a punishment for all my selfish ways. Oh, Patience, it is for Mother that I grieve most. What will she do? What will she think when she does not see us appear?"

"Yes, and Edwin," moaned Patience; "he has been expecting us so anxiously, and fancy, Joyce, in the last letter he ever wrote, he asked me to settle our wedding-day. I had settled St. John the Baptist Day; you would be well, and Christopher would give me away, and——" The bright picture Patience had woven, increased her present misery tenfold.

Joyce, however, was not so cast down.

"We must not give way, nor appear afraid, before these French people. Poor old Patience, you are quite done up; come and lie down, and try and sleep."

Patience obeyed mechanically, and Joyce covered her over, with a new feeling of tenderness for the kind elder sister, who till now had always been the one whom she looked to for advice. Joyce knelt down and tried to collect her excited thoughts before saying her evening

prayers. It was all so strange, so extraordinary, that for a long time she could not call up any holy words ; she could only rehearse in her mind the events of the last few hours. As she knelt thus, some marks on the wall caught her eye ; by the dim light of the small lamp which the jailor had brought she stooped down to examine them, and found they were letters rudely scratched with some sharp stone or piece of metal—only five letters, and very soon she had deciphered them. They were meant to be read as two words, “A-Dieu.” Ah! some one more unfortunate than herself must have written this ; some one who, doubtless, had no tender father or kind sister with him, and yet had wished to write his last farewell on rude stones to unburden his heart ; but in this last farewell he or she gave his dear ones into God’s hands, knowing that with Him they would be in safe keeping—safe as the sad prisoner himself was at the moment he wrote these words.

Those five letters taught Joyce more trust than she had learnt in all her fifteen years on earth. Now she could follow Patience’s example, and lie down, thinking more calmly

of her mother, of Christopher, and of the dear Baby. God had been with them all those happy years at the old Parsonage, and would He forsake them now in this silent, dull, dreary prison, overlooking the valley beneath the old town of Baume ?





## CHAPTER VII.

### A FRIEND IN NEED.

**V**ERY early the next morning, the little Doctor Chénier might have been seen hurrying as fast as his legs would let him in the direction of the château. His face was very grave and sober; every now and then he shook his head, as every doctor in every book is said to do, but the "case" in this good man's mind was one which he could not cure with his famous herb concoctions. He had been summoned to the castle early, and the messenger had said that little Monsieur Paul had caught a chill and required the doctor's advice, as Madame was very anxious.

"I was coming of my own accord," answered the doctor, crossly, "but I dare say that both my business and Monsieur Paul can wait till I

have done my cup of chocolate." So now, as he hurried through the narrow street up which he had conducted Joyce not long ago, his thoughts were full of her, and of her father and sister.

When he reached the château he was at once shown up into Madame's boudoir, where she and Mademoiselle Fermaut were having a conversation.

"It is most extraordinary! Paul was quite well last night, and yet this morning there is every appearance of his having caught a thorough chill. Ah! here is good Monsieur Chénier—it is nothing serious, only Paul is very feverish, and now he is so naughty and restless, we can hardly keep him in bed. But what is the matter with you, Doctor? You look quite troubled."

"Well, well, let us see the child first, and then we can talk. Also I must see the Marquis; perhaps he can do something."

"What for?" asked the Marquise, leading the way into the boy's room.

"The Republic has had a fall, Madame."

"A fall?"

"Yes, a fall in my estimation. So, Paul, I

hear you are a naughty boy, and that you have made yourself ill."

Paul did indeed look flushed and feverish. Though undiscovered, he had not come out of his last night's adventure scatheless, having overheated himself with running, and this, with the excitement of the whole proceeding, had given him a severe cold; but the little fellow dared not complain very much, for fear of discovery. Julie knew, but Julie prudently held her tongue.

"I am not *very* ill, Monsieur; it is only a cold, and my throat hurts me, and my legs ache, and——" Paul felt very unlike a brave knight at this moment, for tears were fast gathering in his bright eyes.

"What did you do yesterday?" began the doctor.

"Oh, my cold is nothing," hastily put in the patient, for fear the doctor should get too near the truth.

"Well, I shall prescribe for you, and you must not tumble from side to side like that, but keep warm and quiet, and be a good boy."

"You may well say that," put in Mademoiselle Fermaut in her sharp voice, "for all this

morning he has been teasing me about the English people, as if I were obliged to know."

"Ah!" said the doctor, "what do you know about them, Paul?" but the Marquise interrupted the answer.

"The boy knows nothing, Monsieur; he may have heard his father talk on the subject. However, what news do you bring from the town? Is it true what the servants report, that the inhabitants of Maison Blanche were taken last night? I call it a most unheard-of thing, but you men are all blinded by your First Consul, and think all he does right."

"Alas, the news is true! I own, Madame, that I am as greatly troubled as you can be; indeed I came here on purpose to see the Marquis. Something must be done, positively, for Monsieur Dacre is my patient, and that dreadful damp hole of a prison will kill him. Then if we kill him, we shall have the English Government buzzing about our ears like a swarm of hornets. The First Consul can't intend—— Ah! here is this child listening with all his ears; this will never do."

"You are right, Doctor. Come into my room, or had you not better see my husband

e?" and the two disappeared, much to vexation.

ere, Mademoiselle Fermaut; it is true. are in prison."

ell, and what if they are? They may s, and who knows what besides;" which led to a storm of words between the and the lady.

ther quarrel, though in more dignified ge, was taking place below, the subject still the English people. The doctor's as purple with excitement and indigna- and he had quite forgotten his usual the Marquis.

call it wicked, shameful, Monsieur le is, to take innocent people almost out of eds. It is simply spite. I admire our Republic as much as anyone can do, but i think this is the deed of the Republic? tell you plainly—no, no, no; it is the of a man who has other views than the of his country. He will make us enemies und; he will embitter the minds of aers——"

ently, Monsieur le Docteur; for less men *have* known the inside of a prison."

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"I don't care at all. I would rather prison for some cause, than go, as they none at all. However, Monsieur, y use your influence of course to get th The old man has been my patient, an give a certificate that a sojourn in the place will kill him. It will cost the F a pretty penny if it is going to bury English as well as imprison them."

"I tell you I can't do anything," said the Marquis, impatiently; "the First wrote to me about this very subject. I think he would have done that, if intended me to write back and beg th besides, I said before, what are these p me? Why, nothing—nothing at all."

"What are they to you? Why, they sent the cause of humanity; is that not you?"

The Marquis was beginning to be weary of his fiery visitor, and at last, a little peace, promised to come to the election, which was to take place at three that afternoon.

"Do you see what has already been asked the Marquis, hoping to talk the

into a good temper, as he took up the newspaper; "the armies of the Republic have but to show themselves, and the work is done."

"That is all very fine, but are we going to be any the richer for the occupation of Hanover?"

"We shall close the Elbe against the English trade; they will be enraged."

But though, at another time, the doctor might have been much delighted by the doings of the French armies, he was now thoroughly out of temper, and only vouchsafed a mild grunt of approval before he left the Marquis to his own meditations, which ended in this fashion: "I cannot imagine why *I* of all men should be placed in this predicament. I wish all the English were drowned instead of being detained in France. I know this will not be the end of the trouble they will bring on me." And certainly the English seemed to have sown division at the Château de Baume.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### DEEPENING SHADOWS.

**T**HE May sun could hardly penetrate into the large bare hall of the prison, which was a pleasant fact enough on this particular day, for the heat had suddenly become intolerable. The old houses of Baume were like so many ovens, and it seemed almost a miracle that they did not ignite of their own accord. A modern table covered with a green cloth stood at the upper end of the prison hall, and looked strangely incongruous when contrasted with the old walls and rude floor. Seated round the table were about a dozen gentlemen, among whom were the Mayor, the Prefect, and other officials. There was also a small dark-complexioned man, who was politely called an "Agent" of the First Consul, but many of those present knew that he was

nothing more or less than a police spy, and it was this man whom most of them feared. He had arrived with the despatches from Paris, and was going to watch proceedings in the Provinces; that is to say, he, and many more like him.

"Bring in the prisoners," said the Mayor at last, after much general conversation had taken place; "is there anyone who can talk English here, and ascertain the truth of Doctor Chénier's statement? For my part, I know not what to think, for the orders from Paris are quite clear; the English prisoners were to be forwarded as soon as possible to the capital."

"I tell you it is impossible," said the Doctor, hotly; "the suddenness of this blow has quite upset the poor gentleman; he could not travel now. I suppose the Consul does not want corpses sent to him?"

"Certainly not," answered the Agent, smiling under his moustache; "the Consul has enough living English in the capital, but I conclude this building can hold three individuals?"

"No, it can't," retorted the doctor. "As

to talking, they can talk French fast enough," and at this minute the door opened, and Mr. Dacre and his two daughters were ushered in, guarded by two soldiers. The clergyman looked ten years older since this trouble had come upon him, and was, moreover, so weak that he was forced to lean on his daughter's arm. Joyce looked up defiantly as she entered; she was not going to be afraid of a dozen Frenchmen. Even the sight of Doctor Chénier did not make her feel less angry. Now began the tedious examination, and a string of perfectly useless questions. Mr. Dacre replied to them with calmness, and now and then reproved Joyce in English when she answered indignantly.

"Remember, my child, these men have nothing to do with our imprisonment. It will only injure our cause to make them angry."

"How are we to know they are not spies?" whispered the Agent, pressing near the Mayor. "And where is the Marquis? I thought some one said these people were his friends."

The Marquis entered at this moment, and turned a little pale as he heard this last remark.

"Pardon me, Monsieur, I know nothing of them, except through this letter of introduction which I bring with me, and which I received from an English physician, whom I once knew. What has been found out from the examination?"

"Oh, nothing, of course," said the Prefect, "but I know not what to do. Doctor Chénier says it is impossible Mr. Dacre should be sent to Paris; if so, we must wait for orders from thence. Perhaps, Monsieur le Marquis, you would yourself appeal to the First Consul, as you know——"

"I tell you I know nothing, and I wash my hands of the whole business."

All this conversation had taken place in a low voice; then the Prefect informed Mr. Dacre that he was very sorry for the weak condition he was now in, and that he would forward a report of the case to Paris, but that till then he must follow the orders received, and that he must still remain in the apartments he at present occupied. The Prefect was indeed quite civil; the demeanour of the Englishman had turned the scale in his favour, and Doctor Chénier's indignation had also done

something for them. When they were on more in their little bare sitting-room, Patience and Joyce had no leisure to discuss the proceedings, for Mr. Dacre seemed quite speechless and had not Doctor Chénier followed the bringing with him some restoratives, the two girls would have been very much at a loss what to do.

"Come, come, you must cheer up," he said. "I told those men my mind. The truth is, they are all mortally afraid of the Consuls, and yet they wish to make out that they belong to a free Republic! Now, Monsieur Dacre, have the goodness to take this and lay it down on the bed; we shall soon get you out of this hole, I doubt not."

"Then you think we shall be able to get home soon?" asked Patience quickly, her narrow thin pale face flushing up for the moment.

"Ah, I did not say that, my child; here Miss Joyce looking as if she could eat anything up," and in spite of his concern for his patient, the doctor burst out laughing.

"No, I will make the exception for you. What should we have done without you? I believe those cruel people would have se-

us all to Paris, and my father would have died on the way." Joyce was growing older in spite of her impetuous manners; these last days had wrought a great change in her. She could never again be the same selfish girl who had left England so few months before.

"Oh, Doctor Chénier," cried Patience, clasping her small hands in her despair, "is it quite impossible to send letters to England, and is it quite impossible that we should receive any?"

"We must see, we must see; but you must have patience. Why, you must have been named thus on purpose; it is all for the best, only we cannot see it."

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Dacre, who now began to revive a little, "I tell my daughters that they must have faith, whilst I—ah! doctor, I have sore need of it too, when I think of my dear wife and of my other children."

"Tut, tut," said the doctor, gruffly, to hide his emotion, "you will soon get strong now; it was only the excitement of all this unpleasant business that upset you: besides, we shall make the Marquis bestir himself in spite



of his unwillingness to do so ; his little son, Paul, is quite on your side."

"Yes, he came last night and warned me," said Joyce.

"What, Paul ? That accounts for his cold—little rascal ! However, now I must hasten away, and not leave these gentlemen a moment's peace till they have procured you better lodgings," and away he went.

"How kind he is !" said Patience. "One learns what true goodness means on these occasions."

"Won't Jasper open his eyes when he hears we are in a real prison ?" answered Joyce, laughing.

The confinement had not hurt her at all. Patience was far more inclined to droop. They were not, it must be owned, unkindly treated, but the cell-like chambers were very damp and dirty, and the confinement trying to the air-loving English. Had it not been for the constant gentle words of their father, Joyce would have been far less patient than she was, but she did try to follow his example, knowing that his burden must be far heavier to bear than hers.

In the meantime the Marquis returned home in no enviable mood, and when he told his wife the result of the examination, she only answered that it would serve Bonaparte right if at some future time the English repaid him with interest for this insult.

"Well, I don't say it is quite prudent," said her husband, "but, you see, he is evidently very angry with our neighbours. They wish me to petition him in behalf of these people I know nothing about, and I have refused."

The Marquise determined to send a few delicacies to the prisoners, and this was the only way she could show her dislike of Bonaparte. Of course Paul and Julie discussed these events as well as their betters, but with no mixed feelings.

"I wonder what it feels like, to be in prison?" said Julie; "I wish we could go there just to see;" but Paul would not second this wish, although he had grand ideas of setting his Lady free. When he was able to get up, he and his sister had frequent games at being in prison; wonderful escapes and thrilling adventures were rehearsed in their large play-room; but all this time the

father and his two daughters still lingered in their gloomy cells, waiting, oh, how anxiously, for news from Paris, and hoping, with a hope almost heart-breaking in its intensity, for one word, one message of love from England. The long strain told visibly on Mr. Dacre; he daily lost strength, and Patience was becoming morbid and low-spirited. One evening, when the little lamp had been brought in, and they were left to themselves for the night, Patience threw herself down by her father, and, hiding her face against him, sobbed as if her heart would break.

“Father, indeed I can’t bear it; has God quite forsaken us? Oh, why must we suffer like this?”

Mr. Dacre gently smoothed the bright hair, but made no reply till the grief had subsided; then when her sobs had died away a little, he said slowly—

“I want to tell you both, my children, that something warns me that I shall never again see my dear wife, nor my country. Yesterday the idea appeared too dreadful, too impossible to entertain, but to-day God has sent me the requisite strength to bear whatever He sees fit

to inflict, and you too must strive earnestly for resignation."

Patience looked up; this new trouble in prospect made her own special burden seem as nothing.

"Father, what makes you think that you will never see England again? Doctor Chénier says you are better. Indeed I will try to be calm for your sake. How selfish I have been!"

"If I am taken," continued Mr. Dacre, in a low voice, "you must cling to each other and comfort each other; remember that God will be your Father, and be sure that He will never forsake you."

A hush fell upon the party, and after this evening Patience never again intruded her sorrows upon her good father's patient resignation.





## CHAPTER IX.

### GOING HOME.

**A**LL along the French coast an extraordinary bustle and excitement was taking place ; in fact, the whole country was worked up to a great state of enthusiasm, so that each Department tried to outdo its neighbour in sending substantial help to the First Consul for the invasion of England. Every harbour from Brest to Texel was rapidly filled with gunboats of different sizes ; in the dockyards the shipwrights were ceaselessly at work, and as soon as a boat was finished, it was sent round, under the protection of the numerous batteries, with which the coast abounded, to Cherbourg, Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk.

This work was, however, carried on under great difficulties, for the English cruisers seemed to possess magical powers of always

appearing when they were least wanted. If Napoleon had not himself looked after the minutest details, and allowed no peace to those invested with authority, the boats would have had very little chance of arriving at their destination. As soon as the English cruisers were blown off their stations by contrary winds, the various harbours were made aware of the fact. Immediately numerous vessels might be seen cautiously creeping round the headlands, whilst on land the artillerymen at their several batteries stood ready, match in hand, to open fire upon any English ships that might appear in sight. However, the wind could not always be reckoned upon, so that sometimes it happened that the boats were intercepted and destroyed by the British. Innumerable deeds of daring and courage were performed, and much valuable life was lost for very little purpose. In this petty warfare, Captain Owen in the *Immortality*, and Sir Sidney Smith in the *Antelope*, distinguished themselves greatly, as did also Captain Wright, on whose ship our friend Jasper Dacre was. Indeed, it must be owned that that young gentleman greatly enjoyed

this period of his life, and stored up enough stories about deeds of heroism to serve him for the rest of his days.

Jasper was somewhat of a hero himself among his companions, not only because of his uncommon pluck and daring, but also for the simple reason that it was now known that his father and sisters were among the many unfortunates detained in France. Jasper was never tired of saying that the war would soon be over, and that Boney should be well licked to reward him for his conduct; that he, Jasper, should go and liberate his father, and would show Napoleon that such things could not be done with impunity.

"But you must catch Boney first," said his companions, "and there seems to be some chance of his catching us," as indeed there was; but the Captain, who now and then overheard the conversation, would smile and say that "Dacre had a good deal to learn before he could beard Napoleon." Jasper was somewhat offended once when Captain Wright touched at Dover, and took on board a "lot of those horrid Frenchmen," as the boy expressed it. Among these were Pichegru and many of

his friends. Of course the midshipman knew nothing of plots, and only enjoyed the excitement of landing the Frenchmen unperceived by the vigilant watchers of the coast. This they effected between Dieppe and Tréport, and not till Captain Wright was safe out at sea again did he communicate to the crew the danger they had incurred. Had the French authorities detected them bringing over the enemies of the First Consul, certainly their lives would not have been spared. "Remember," said the Captain to his men, "that should we be taken, the secrets of these foreigners are safe with British subjects; no fear of death would make it right for us to betray the men who have trusted us with their lives."

Little did Jasper then guess that the pleasant excitement of that cruise would cost the life of the Captain, whom the whole crew loved and obeyed as their father. Other orders now reached Captain Wright, who, accordingly, sailed away to Spain, much to Jasper's disappointment, for he had firmly believed in his own powers of rescuing his father. The boy had received several despairing letters from his mother, with enclosures,



which he was to deliver to anyone who seemed likely to be able to forward them to his father, if indeed he were still at Baume, for now the weeks had sped onwards, and no news of his whereabouts had transpired. There were many in like circumstances of ignorance about their friends, who sympathised sincerely with Mrs. Dacre, and there were others who knew that their relations were living in Paris prisons. Jasper had not forgotten the letters; he had begged the Captain to ask Pichegru to take them, and this latter had readily consented to do his best, though he would be in extreme danger himself for some time to come at least. He was going to plot against the First Consul, and had yet to find out that this could not be done with impunity. Jasper posted a letter home when he reached Lisbon, telling his mother what he had done, and this was her first grain of consolation.

We must now go back to our friends at Baume, who, in spite of Doctor Chénier's assurances of speedy deliverance, still lingered in prison. Letters to Napoleon were not by any means sure to get answered; indeed it was the First Consul's habit to throw all his

epistles into a basket, and allow them to lie there for twenty days or more, after which time he and his secretary found that half of them did not require an answer, but had brought their own solution.

Patience was beginning to think what she should soon do to procure her father the necessary delicacies which his state of health required, for their money was fast diminishing, and how were they to obtain more? Patience could find no answer to this question, and she had reached that stage of depression when she ceased to wonder at anything; the dull pain at her heart with regard to her father and Edwin never left her; only Joyce kept up a fund of hope. Every time the door opened the girl looked up, eagerly expecting some tidings, good or bad—something in fact to vary this dreadful monotony—but day after day passed, and still no news. Had it not been for the doctor's unfailing kindness, their imprisonment would have been far worse; and now the days became weeks, and the weeks months. When three of these had passed, Joyce's hopes were rewarded. One evening in August, as the three sat in the small stuffy court-yard of the prison

(where they were allowed to take the air) which was only one degree preferable to the cells, the doctor rushed frantically across the yard, waving a paper high above his head. He looked purple with excitement, and began to speak eagerly long before he reached the door.

Mr. Dacre smiled—his smiles were resignation and sweetness, though there was but little joy in them.

“Well, good friend, what do you bring—then, seeing the letter, his voice trembled a little—“is it news of my dear wife?”

“No, not that, but what will in time bring you nearer to her; this is the order for her release.”

Patience started up, the blood rushed to her pale face.

“Oh, is it really true? You cannot mean it?”

Joyce alone remained calm. She had stood at once that the doctor only meant to secure her release from prison.

“My child, you would not want to see Mr. Baume quite so unceremoniously. But you are all to be lodged in the town, as that is not good for my patient, and you will be free—just on your *parole*, Monsieur Da-

"What does that mean?" asked Patience absently. All the light seemed to become darkness for her.

"Your father must give his word to remain at Baume, but you will be free to go where you like, within certain limits; you will all take pleasant walks by the river in the cool of the evening. Oh, you will enjoy yourselves very much."

Patience turned away to hide her disappointment; if coming out of prison meant staying at Baume, she did not much care what happened. Joyce was the first to answer.

"You are very good to us, Monsieur Chénier; if it had not been for you, we should never have got out of prison. You don't know how I long to be able to run along freely. I shall not quite hate Baume now."

The doctor smiled; these words cheered him. Joyce was his favourite of the two girls; she had more spirit; but then, thought he, the other has a lover, and that always spoils every character. The doctor had never been married, and expended much pity on lovers.

Mr. Dacre held out his hand without saying

anything, but the kind Frenchman wanted no other thanks.

"That is well. I have chosen your rooms—small but neat—and I have ordered your trunks to be taken there. I had some difficulty in making the Republic give them up, but I teased them till they were sick of me, and consented. The Prefect will come himself to-morrow. There, now I must go. Your house is by the river, and will be cool and charming."

"And you must come soon, and tell us all about your First Consul," said Mr. Dacre; "here we get very few accounts of that great man's doings."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "I tell you there is more than you imagine in that man; he wants his own good, not the good of the nation. Look at the conscriptions going on now. Every lad is taken from his mother's side. Do you call *that* good for the nation?" But happily a messenger came to fetch the Doctor, or he might have gone on talking till morning!

It was indeed lovely August weather. Down by the river the air came in gentle breezes in

the evening ; the bargemen smoked their pipes leaning against the lime trees which bordered the water, talking to their wives or sweethearts, for in those days there was much to talk of. Napoleon was a never-ending theme, and, after Napoleon, one always spoke of the war, and that topic too was inexhaustible. Every now and then a mother would dash away the tears that rose to her eyes because Pierre was with the army, and he was her darling, her youngest ; or else it was the widow, who put in a few bitter words because they had forced her only one to go and fight, but the sole comfort her audience gave her was, that "it was good for the glory of France." She loved France well, ah, very well, but she loved her boy better, and he might, at this very minute, be lying wounded somewhere in a strange land with no one to nurse him. So in spite of the beautiful evening, the gleam on the water, and the clear light of the first stars, there was a great deal of sorrow mixed with the joy which the nation was so loudly expressing.

Presently there was a movement in the crowd ; they fell back to make way for four people who walked slowly along the path.

"The English people," it was whispered; "and there is Doctor Chénier with them. They have come out of prison, and they are going to live by the river, in that little house yonder that belongs to the town. Ah, the old man looks ill, very ill, and the daughter—how pale, how thin——"

There were no angry looks that evening; indeed it would have been difficult to feel anything but pity for those three, innocent as they were of any misdeed, except that they had been unfortunate enough to be in France when the war broke out.

When they had left the town a little way behind them, the party sat down on a bench under the lime trees. Joyce could hardly believe that they were at last not restrained by walls and able to walk about, but Patience forgot to be thankful, because her father had given his parole not to leave Baume, and they could not leave him; if it had not been for that they might have escaped, but now they were more true prisoners than even when in prison.

"Well, well, this is better than the prison?" asked the doctor, after a long silence.

"Yes, indeed ; my heart rises towards God in thanksgiving. I know He has not forsaken us," said Mr. Dacre, "and to-night I feel as if my wife and all my children were with me. We may surely believe at such times in the Communion of Saints. What news do you hear, doctor, from England?"

"There has been a rising in Ireland, and your Irish brothers have murdered their Chief-Justice, Lord Kilwarden ; they dragged him out of his carriage, and murdered him under the very eyes of his daughter."

Joyce shuddered.

"How dreadful for her ! What did she do?"

"They say she fled to the Castle, nearly dead with fright ; they have put the whole story in our papers, to show that over yonder *you* are not too gentle."

"The Lord knows that our sins are many," said Mr. Dacre ; "we cannot be the first to cast a stone at our neighbours. But how does the First Consul progress?"

"Your vessels have taken St. Lucia and Talago ; some of our other islands will fall into your hands, no doubt. However, the time has



not come yet for Napoleon to strike a decisive blow."

"We must be going home soon," said Mr. Dacre, rising; "perhaps it may not be long before I am called to a better home, where there will be no more war, no tears, and no troubles."

"Dear Father, please don't say that," said Joyce, kissing her father's hand as it lay on her shoulder. "What should we do without you? Besides, a little more patience, and we shall all go home to Paston, and to Mother." But the old man shook his head; he had now given up hoping, though he could not say it in so many words.

Soon the whole party returned to the small house by the river, which was to be their home for a time—each one tried to settle the probable length of their stay, saying to themselves, "It cannot be more than a month—six months; surely not more than a year!"



## CHAPTER X.

### THE BARGE-BOY.

CAPTAIN WRIGHT had not given his crew a needless warning when he told them that they would henceforth be marked men if ever they should fall into the hands of the French. In the spring of 1804, when the great equinoxial gales were blowing, the brave ship was wrecked on the coast of Morbihan. The cruel waves caught the vessel and hurled it ruthlessly on the sharp rocks; all night she was dashed about, the men clinging where they could. In the morning they were seen from the shore, willing hands were stretched out to help them; many of the sailors, however, perished, but some twenty of them were brought safely to land, among whom were Captain Wright

and Jasper. But the kindness that had helped them to shore now stopped; they were English, and that was enough to make them objects of suspicion and dislike; and when they were taken before the authorities, and it was found out that Captain Wright was the man who had brought over the conspirators, Pichegru and his friends, assassins in the pay of England, then indeed their fury knew no bounds; he and his remaining crew were sent up to Paris and thrown into prison, to await their examination.

Jasper was too bright and hopeful to be downcast; besides, he was a boy, and the Captain told him he would soon be released, and the worst that could happen to him would be to be sent to Verdun with other prisoners of war; "but remember, Dacre, don't let them make you say anything that might hurt those poor fellows, though I fancy they have long ago been arrested; they will use us as witnesses against them, if they can."

"They may cut my tongue out, but they will never make me confess anything," replied Jasper, "and now perhaps I shall have a chance of speaking my mind to the Consul

about my father's imprisonment. What do you think, Captain?"

"I should say nothing at all, which would be the better part of valour," answered the Captain, smiling; and then in their lonely cell he tried to amuse the boy by stories of heroic deeds, which he had witnessed when he served at Acre, under Sir Sidney Smith.

Whilst these unfortunate prisoners awaited their trial, grand doings were going on at Paris; at last Napoleon had shown his true colours—at last he was going to take the proud name of Emperor. After three days' debate, the Tribunate declared Napoleon hereditary Emperor of the French, the members of his family were proclaimed Princes of the blood, and tremendous preparations were made for the coronation of the Emperor and Empress. If the populace did not receive this news with fervour, any lack of it was made up by the army. Napoleon was essentially a soldier, and knew how to please soldiers. At Boulogne he had a splendid review of his troops, and, seated on an iron chair, which had belonged to King Dagobert, he received the homage of the shouting host. After the review, mounting

a beautiful horse, he rode slowly along the ranks, and stopping now and then, singled out private soldiers, with such remarks as, "Ah! you are a veteran! How is your old father? I have seen you at Aboukir, or the Pyramids. You have not a cross of honour; here is one for you." Nor was it only his own soldiers whose bravery he could admire. One day two English sailors were brought to him; they had made their escape from Verdun, the present home of many prisoners, and had meant to cross the Channel in a frail boat of their own making. Napoleon was astonished at their bravery.

"Is it really true that you have endeavoured to cross the sea in that bark?"

"Ah, sire, if you doubt it, give us leave, and you will see us set out instantly."

"I indeed wish it. You are bold, enterprising men, but I will not let you expose your lives. You are free; further, I will cause you to be conducted on board an English ship, and you shall return to London and tell the English what esteem I have for the brave even among my enemies."

Alas, the Emperor did not often allow his

feelings for "the brave" to get the better of what he considered necessary prudence. If any crossed his path, so much the worse for them: with pitiless hand they were swept away.

Captain Wright knew this, but at his preliminary examination he remained firm to his resolve; his only answer to the questions put to him was, "Gentlemen, I am an officer of the British navy. I care not what treatment you reserve for me; I am not bound to account to you for the orders I received, and I decline your jurisdiction."

Jasper was also examined, but as they deemed him a mere boy, they did not push matters very far with him; indeed he was told that in two days he was to be removed from Paris and sent to Verdun. These last two days he spent with his Captain, receiving messages and letters, which, if possible, he was to deliver to Wright's friends if ever, or whenever, he got back to England. "And I have no doubt that you will get back, my boy," said Wright; "but remember, your honour above everything, and the honour of England, and whatever you may hear to

the contrary, be sure that even tortures will not, I hope, make me alter my resolutions. Good-bye, and God bless you, my boy." This was the parting between the two, a parting which Jasper never forgot all his life long; then they fetched him away, and, with many other prisoners of war, he was conveyed to Verdun. The officers were all put on their parole, but the midshipmen were considered too young to bind in this manner, for the authorities trusted to their penniless and friendless condition to keep them from escaping.

But Jasper's one idea, night and day, was to escape; he had so often read of escapes, of hairbreadth adventures, wonderful leaps from prison walls, that he carefully looked out for a chance; but time passed on, and he was enabled to succeed. He carefully informed himself of the distance between Verdun and Baume, and was not dismayed by finding how many days he would have to travel before reaching it.

"I will beg and work my way," thought he. "How fortunate that I was never put on my parole, because then I should have been

chained here for ever, but now I am free to escape if I can." He was a brave, plucky fellow, but he, too, had his moments of despair; his mother would hear of his capture, and her troubles would thus be doubled. Now and then he wrote letters, and tried to smuggle them to England. Once he had the offer of accompanying an English officer who was going to throw his parole to the wind, and risk a flight, but the boy's nature rebelled against anything dishonourable, and he refused. "It can't prosper," he said to himself, "and I won't be a party to it." At last, after many, many months of patient waiting, all Jasper's plans were laid. He had collected a few old clothes, a blouse, and a peasant's cap, and had procured a file to file through a bar from a ground floor window which was not well protected. "At all events I will try," thought he, "to reach my father; and if I never get to Baume, it will not be for want of trying."

Another year had dragged by, and the Dacres still lived in their small home by the river. Now it was summer-time, warm and bright, but Mr. Dacre was no longer able to



move out and enjoy the sunshine and air, for he was rapidly sinking. In vain Patience had shut her eyes to the fact, and had foretold that the winter would bring back her father's strength ; next it was the spring which was to do that renovating work ; but when winter and spring failed, she said the summer was what he required, and now summer was come, and he only grew weaker daily.

Their untiring friend the doctor had been of great use to them ; without him and the Marquise they would have suffered far more, for their money was all spent, and the daily pittance allowed by Government was very small. They had one great joy, however, the receipt of the letters Pichegru had taken charge of. Poor Pichegru had committed suicide in prison ; so it was given out, and the French nation received this news and believed it just as quietly as they had taken the news of the seizure and death of the Duke d'Enghien.

No one knew how the letters had reached Baume, but the father and daughters cared not, so long as they had them. How they were read and re-read ! Mr. Dacre was constantly seen with his wife's last words in his hand,

now and then even smiling as he looked at them.

"Oh, Joyce, Joyce, I do believe Father would get well if only Mother were here." That "if only" was indeed an impossibility.

Joyce was now a strong, pretty girl of seventeen, but there was never to be a "sweet seventeen" for her; she was already a woman in mind, though now and then, in spite of their troubles, her clear laugh was heard. There are no such things as broken down spirits at seventeen! Patience had forgotten that she had once thought little of her younger sister, and was only too ready to lean upon her, and depend on her strength of character. And they had both need of strength at this moment; even Patience could not blind herself to her father's state.

"The sun is not very hot now," she said one afternoon; "would you go to Madame Vaux, down the river about half-a-mile; I know she has nice grapes to sell, and Father is asking for some; they will be cheaper there than in the market."

Joyce nodded, but first she had a painful duty to perform, for she it was who kept the

purse, and she knew it was impossible to afford even cheap grapes. She therefore went to her room, and took a small gold locket out of a drawer; it was a dearly loved possession of her youth, which seemed so long ago, poor child, and contained her mother's hair, the mother who had always loved her so fondly, even when she had been ill, and cross, and selfish. Then she went into the town to a small out-of-the-way shop, where dwelt an old Jew, who would kindly take what was brought to him, and give the owner about a third of its value. Lately he had often seen Joyce, and knew the pretty English girl well, though she had long got over her English accent, and could speak French like a native.

Joyce received her money and then hurried back to the river, along which she had to walk for a mile, to reach Madame Vaux. Presently she espied Paul and Julie walking sedately with Mademoiselle Fermaut. Joyce had not seen much of the children, as the Marquis was more strict than ever about having no communication with the Dacres, and had he known that his wife sent them small presents, he would not have been at all

pleased, so that it was a great event to Paul when he met Joyce, and he ran up to meet her with great glee.

"I have a great piece of news for you ; oh, guess ; but you will never be able to."

"It is something very wonderful indeed," put in Julie.

"As you say I cannot guess, then you must tell me," said Joyce.

"Well," answered Paul, "Papa has heard that soon, the time is not quite certain yet, the Emperor will be our guest, and I shall ask him to let you all go back to England, and he cannot refuse if I ask him, it would not be courteous."

Joyce shook her head. "You must not do that unless your papa gives you leave, and he will not allow it, I think."

"I fancy not," said Mademoiselle Fermaut.

"How is your father ?" put in Julie, who had been brought up to remember her elders.

"He is very ill, and I must not stop now, I am going to buy some grapes for him," and smiling her good-bye she walked on, reached Madame Vaux's house, bought her grapes, and was soon again on her homeward road, but

she was, however, doomed to be hindered. A large barge was being unloaded, and a group of men were blocking up the road, which was not much more than a towing-path. There was much talking and shouting as the men unloaded. Joyce paused a moment, and then, fearing to delay longer, asked a tall lad, who was looking on, and seemed to belong to the party, whether she might soon pass in safety. The lad turned round quickly and looked up into her face, then he nodded, and led the way into a safe corner. When out of sight of the men he paused, and, touching Joyce on the arm, said in a low voice, and in English—

“I do believe, Joyce, you don’t know me. I recognised you directly you spoke.”

“Jasper!” and Joyce turned pale with emotion.

“I say, don’t make a row; tell me where you live, then I’ll go back and get leave. I’ve worked my way up this river on that barge, but I didn’t expect to have the luck of meeting you the first hour of my landing.”

“Oh Jasper, Jasper, I am glad; be quick, I will wait for you; Father will be so glad too, but——” No, she would not damp her

brother's pleasure, but she had to lean against a tree to steady her trembling limbs. This meeting was happiness, but also sorrow. Why was their family so unfortunate? Were there not enough exiles already, but that another must be added?

"Look here, Joyce, I can't come back with you now; I must get my discharge, but after that, do you think you could hide me? No one must know I am your brother; I've run away from Verdun. How is Father, and dear old Patience? So you are not in prison?" Jasper could not ask his questions fast enough. "And I say, Joyce, *you* are different—so grown, and you don't look ill at all," and Jasper did not disguise his admiration at this pretty sister, who seemed not at all the same creature as the Joyce of old.

"Oh yes, I am quite well, but dear Father is ill—very ill; see, I have been getting these grapes for him; and oh, Jasper, Jasper, when shall we get home?" and now for the first time for months the tears sprang to her eyes, the sight of her brother had for the moment broken down her fortitude.



## CHAPTER XI.

### REST AT LAST.

JOYCE had gone home to prepare Patience and her father for the news of Jasper's appearance, and she settled with him that he was to come when it was dark through a small garden at the back of the house. It would never do if the English people were known to have a relation with them ; besides, Jasper was in great danger of being retaken if he were found out.

It took a long time to persuade Patience that her youngest brother was indeed at Baume ; and when she could no longer doubt the information, her fears about her father returned.

"How shall we tell him, Joyce ? he will be so excited ; and this afternoon, when you were

out, he was constantly fancying that I was Mother, and talked about us all."

"Has the doctor been?" asked Joyce, thoughtfully; "shall we tell him about Jasper? It has just struck me, that if he knew, it would be his duty to inform the authorities."

"I don't know," said Patience, sighing, and seating herself with the air of one who had borne much suffering; "we can't be much more miserable than we are at present."

"Oh, Patience, it would be much worse if we were in that close prison, with nowhere to walk in; but now let us tell Father about Jasper, before I go into the garden to meet him." On tiptoe the young girl entered her father's room, and going up to his bedside, she whispered, "Dear Father," for his eyes were shut, though he was not asleep. Presently he opened them, and said gently—

"Is it you, my dear; I am afraid you have been tiring yourself fetching those grapes. I feel better now. Tell your mother to come here a minute"—then recollecting himself, he added—"ah, I forgot, we must be patient, little Joyce, for a while longer, you know."

"Yes, Father, but can you guess who I



met just now? Some one you will like to see."

"There is no one I wish to see now, dear. Draw back the curtain and let in the evening light;" and then he murmured half to himself, "at evening-time there shall be light."

Joyce waited till her father had eaten a few grapes before she began again; she was afraid of too much joy now for the father who had so bravely borne so much sorrow.

"This somebody I met is coming to see you this evening, Father, and is longing for the time, but thought it safer to wait till dark."

Mr. Dacre looked up into the girl's face without saying a word; then something in her expression struck him; the thin, white hand trembled a little as it lay on the bed.

"Who is it, dear?"

"It is Jasper," interrupted Joyce, fearing her father might for a moment imagine it was his wife who had found her way to him. "Jasper was taken, and sent to Verdun as a prisoner of war, but as he was not on his parole, he managed to run away."

Mr. Dacre recovered his quiet demeanour in a moment.

"That is indeed good news, Joyce. God is very good to allow me to have three loving children near me, but your poor mother—her sorrow makes me sad—when will my boy come? He must not wait long."

Joyce felt a pang shoot through her. The words were true; there was no time for long waiting now.

In the small back garden attached to the Dacres' house, Joyce might have been seen that evening, at nine o'clock, pacing anxiously up and down. She was terribly anxious. Suppose Jasper, who was so daring, should have done something foolish, and should have been taken up? She could see the light in her father's room, and the shadow of Patience on the window-blind, as she sat watching. The doctor had luckily paid his last visit for that night, and that was one good thing. In the midst of these meditations there came a rush, and Jasper alighted at her feet, having vaulted over the low wall; he laughed heartily at the start his sister gave.

"My dear Jasper! how could you? hush! don't make a noise; happily we have no servant now, or I don't know what excuse we

could have found for your arrival. Now come gently."

"Wait a moment, Joyce; I want to understand all about your locality. If they want to shut me up again I will run for it—try to, at all events. Who lives next door? This narrow alley at the back seemed to be the outside wall of a convent, so of course nuns won't be curious about a working man."

"The next house belongs to a shoemaker. He is an honest man, but a red-hot republican, and would denounce an Englishman with great pleasure. But come, Jasper, Father is anxious to see you; you mustn't be surprised at the change."

Jasper made no further remark till they were just entering his father's room, then he said in a whisper, "You told Father I wasn't on 'parole,' didn't you? He won't think one of His Majesty's servants has disgraced himself?"

"Yes, I told him." Then Joyce opened the door, and said, gently—

"Father, here is Jasper."

Mr. Dacre opened his eyes, and a happy smile of recognition lit up his face as he held

out his hand. Jasper seized it, and, kneeling down, buried his face in the bed, trying to smother the sob that would come.

"Father, are you so very ill? See, I am here, and I am strong. I can do anything—fetch an English doctor, if you like; these horrid French fellows can't understand how to cure you."

"Nay, boy, we have a very kind friend in our doctor; he has done all man can do. But tell me, Jasper, what you know of your mother."

Patience came and put her arms round her brother's neck, and he clung to her—dear old Patience, as he called her. But he had no words or looks but for the father, who was so changed, and whose words came with so much effort and pain. Jasper could tell nothing very new about home; he was glad to hear that the letters had reached them, but could supplement nothing.

"You must take care of your sisters when I can do so no longer. If you can escape, it would be quite justifiable—it was for my sake they stayed; but I shall soon no longer require their help. Yet remember, Jasper, do not run into needless danger; it would be better to

remain here quietly for some time. Events may happen which would release us and all our countrymen from this unlawful captivity; the tyrant will some day be called to account. Now go and rest, my boy; Patience will sit by me a while till I sleep, and to-morrow I may be more able to talk to you. God bless you, my boy."

Then Joyce and Jasper retired. A bed had been made up for Jasper in a small lumber closet whose window happily looked out on the convent walls. The brother and sister lingered a little, they had so much to say to each other.

"It seems so funny, Joyce, to see you going about, and doing everything; don't you remember how you used to lie down all day and grumble? but that seems so long ago."

"Yes, I remember, I must have been very horrid; but I have had a long cure. I don't know what we shall do for money soon; Father must have good food, and we have no money; they give us only just enough to buy the barest necessities. Patience and myself have nearly sold all our own little things which we brought from England."

Jasper pulled out a purse from his pocket.

"I have a little ; see, they paid me well for my work, but they would not have done so had they known I was a runaway. There is not much, but I will work, and you shan't want for anything ; and now tell me all that has happened to you."

So the two talked on by the light of the moon, speaking of all that had taken place, and discussing ways and means, as if they had been old wise heads of fifty instead of being only in their teens. Joyce did not forget to speak of Doctor Chénier in glowing terms.

"He comes here every day, but I dare not tell him about you, it might get him into trouble, or put him in a predicament ; but indeed, Jasper, you must go to bed, we shall have time to talk to-morrow." Joyce was just going to leave her brother, when Patience opened the door.

"Oh, you are not gone to bed ; come quickly, both of you. What shall we do ? what shall we do ?" In another moment the three were by their father's bedside. At first Joyce could see no change ; he still lay there quietly, with his head turned a little on one side.

She went close to him, and touched his hand, but started back—it was cold, cold as death.

“Patience, what is it?”

“It must have happened in his sleep. I sat by him till he closed his eyes, and just before that he said ‘Good-night,’ and then I thought I heard the word ‘home.’ For some time I listened to his regular breathing, it was so gentle, so like a child’s, I don’t think I noticed when it stopped; but just before I called you I moved the light, it fell on his face, and then—I knew,” and Patience clung round her sister, sobbing.

“Let us fetch Doctor Chénier,” said Joyce at last; and Jasper insisted on being the messenger, saying he would only be looked upon as one of the lads about. He was a great comfort to the sisters, for though he felt the blow deeply, he had not had those long hours and days of watching which had tried their strength so much.

“It was fortunate I got here when I did,” he said to himself, as he walked along the deserted streets; “but I don’t see my way to escaping with two sisters, so pretty as they are too.”

It need hardly be said that the kind doctor did not take long to reach the house of his English friends, nor that he spared no pains to save them trouble. He had known for some days that the end was not far off, but he had not thought it necessary to warn Patience and Joyce. "The blow will come upon them soon enough," he said; and now he was all sympathy and kindness. Patience was ordered to bed, as she was quite done up. The doctor suggested fetching their old servant, Jeanne, but Joyce interfered.

"Indeed we want no one. We are not afraid; why should we be? Dear Father has only gone home, he said so himself." The doctor was surprised at the girl's vehemence, little guessing that her anxiety was now for the living, and not for the dead; for Jasper all this time was a prisoner in his closet, and must be discovered if any stranger came to sleep in the house.





## CHAPTER XII.

### NAPOLEON.

THE whole of Château Baume was being turned upside down and inside out for the expected guest. The Marquis was in a fever of anxiety for fear everything should not be exactly right. He built great hopes upon this visit of the Emperor, which it had pleased Napoleon to propose, as he wished to overlook the war preparations of the surrounding districts, having thought that part of the country somewhat remiss in its efforts. The Marquise, unlike her husband, took the event very quietly, and did not over-exert herself with preparations. She even remarked once, after an unusual day of preparation—

“Although your Emperor dresses himself in a green velvet mantle, studded with diamonds and golden bees, yet once upon a time he was

quite a nobody, who possessed nothing but his sword and his cloak."

"That is what the little solicitor, Ragideau, said, when the beautiful Josephine wished to marry her brave soldier; and do you remember how it was told that the other day, just before going to Notre Dame to be crowned by His Holiness the Pope, he sent for that same Ragideau, to show him what the sword and the cloak had turned into." The Marquise shrugged her shoulders as she answered—

"I heartily wish he had but those two possessions at this moment, and were not going to bring his suite, &c. I only hope we shall not get into debt for all this new furniture; I cannot see where the money is to come from."

"But you never will look at the future, Madame. Why, this visit may be worth a great deal to us. I shall prove to the Emperor that I am devoted to his cause, in which case he must give me some lucrative post; and besides, what may he not do for Paul when he gets older? Come here, Paul, and tell me whether you would serve under our great General, who is now our Emperor?"

"Yes," answered Paul, "I would fight like a hero, and when they made me a general I would marry."

"Whom, then?" but Paul would not reveal that his choice would then fall on Miss Joyce Dacre.

"I should like to be a soldier too," put in Julie, "if I were sure of not being killed; but it must be very uncomfortable to have a bullet through you."

"A bullet would be nothing; it would kill you, and then one might be like Latour D'Auvergne."

"What did he do?"

"Oh, some one told me that he was a brave descendant of Turenne, you know, and he would never accept any honour or money, so now he is dead, his heart is put in a case, and the oldest grenadier of his regiment wears it; then when they read out the roll-call, his name is read out too, and the grenadier who wears his heart answers, 'Died on the field of honour.' That is grand, isn't it, Papa?" Paul's face glowed with excitement, as if he already wished his heart might be carried about by the oldest grenadier!

at this moment Mademoiselle Fermant

"Madame! have you heard that the man is dead? It happened in the and his two daughters were alone with It is dreadful, shocking!"

"For things!" said the Marquise, with real

"I am so very sorry for them. Don't think we might have them here for a few

certainly not," said her husband; "have forgotten that the Emperor is coming?"

the father—well, poor old man, he has all a long time, and one must die sooner or later."

"We should not have liked dying in foggy, England," persisted the Marquise.

"I dare say not, but we can't order these things; besides, what has it to do with us? I did not kill the man. I will see that the daughters have the same kindness shown them before."

"Kindness!" murmured the Marquise, smiling a little scornfully; but she saw it was no use arguing with her husband, so she held her tongue, only she determined that she would

herself see about the poor orphaned strangers. Beneath the stern demeanour of this lady was much true kindness. If she was not considered amiable in society, it was because she had seen the worthlessness of fair words and pleasant smiles, and was herself incapable of putting on what she did not feel. Paul was very grave and silent after hearing of Mr. Dacre's death. Death must be a dreadful thing, thought he, unless one had a chance of having one's heart carried about by a grenadier; perhaps Joyce was crying about her father, and that was sadder still. Never mind, when the Emperor came, he, Paul, would ask him to send back the sisters, and everything would come right.

A few days after Mr. Dacre's death, the Marquise, knowing her husband to be out of the way, filled a small basket with provisions, and walked down the terrace—now bright with blooming flowers, and in perfect order, in expectation of the Emperor—and took the path which led from the park into the road. Presently she heard Paul running after her.

"Mamma, are you going to the town? will you not take me?"

"Why are you not doing your lessons?"

"Because Papa has given me a holiday. Don't you remember that the Emperor is coming, and that makes him so busy," and Paul laughed. He was a fine lad, with bright, dancing eyes, and a noble air. Any parents might have been proud of him ; but his mother grieved over her son's future. All his ancestors had fought for their rightful king, but to her mind, Paul was destined to serve a usurper.

"You are going to see the English ladies, Mamma, are you not? and I want to go particularly." The two walked on gravely along the road. To say the truth, the Marquise did not often go into the town, for she remembered the days when she had been a person of much consequence, when everybody had made way for her as she passed, but now people hardly noticed her. It was all the fault of those Republicans, and out of that body Napoleon had come forth, so he could not be a man to be much honoured.

Patience opened the door, and was much surprised to see who were her visitors ; indeed she was dismayed when she found they were

really coming in, knowing Jasper was about. Happily he had betaken himself upstairs when he heard the knock, and the visitors only found Joyce busy with her needle, trying to make an old black dress tidy; necessity had taught her to use her fingers, as she could not bear to see Patience doing everything. The Marquise was touched by the sight of the poverty in the house, yet it was difficult to offer help. Paul was not at all shy, and went up to Joyce, holding out his hand.

"We are so sorry for you, Mademoiselle; Mamma and I have come to tell you so; but as long as I can draw a sword, you shall not want a protector." Joyce smiled.

"Thank you very much, but I do not think we shall require any help."

"Don't say that," said the Marquise; "I would so willingly do all I could for you. Perhaps after"—she was going to say the Emperor's visit, but stopped short. "In a little time you would come to the château for a few days; that would do you good."

"Thank you, Madame, you are very kind; but we shall manage very well alone, Patience and I require so little."

Patience was very absent. The truth was, she was listening to Jasper's footsteps above. He had quite forgotten that people had ears as well as eyes; suppose the Marquise should ask who was in the house with them. Happily this lady never thought about footsteps, and soon rose to go, fearing her husband's return. When she was gone, Jasper came downstairs again.

"Well, what did she say to you? Is she very proud and fine?"

"No," said Joyce; "but of course we cannot accept help from people who showed so little kindness to our dear father. I would rather work my fingers bare."

"But you might have asked her if she could give us some work," said Patience. "I was listening to your footsteps, Jasper, and could think of nothing else; you really must be more prudent."

"Ah, well, I had forgotten. I wish I could think of some good plan of escape; that was what I was pondering over when I walked the decks above. One thing is certain, we must scrape some money together, for we must have some in reserve. I shall try my luck on



the river this evening; they have been very busy with some more unloading to-day."

"I can't do anything to earn money," said Patience. "I could make dresses, but there seems no opening here." Jasper made a face.

"It seems so odd to hear you talk about making dresses! What would Mother say? Heigh ho! if it wasn't for her, this would be rather amusing." Patience shook her head; she could see no fun in it at all; but she felt the necessity for work, for now they were keeping Jasper on the slender pittance which scarcely sufficed for themselves—all their last money had been spent on their father's funeral.

"I could give English lessons," exclaimed Joyce suddenly; "you see, if the French are going to conquer England, they will want to know the language. I must put my pride in my pocket, and beg the Marquise to recommend me. There are a few rich families in and near the town——But, Jasper, have you formed any plans?"

The idea of escape was now always in their minds, but the difficulties seemed to be endless. How could two girls travel all that distance, and then, how could they get taken across the

Channel? However, anyway, money was needful, and to get money they must work, so Jasper went out that very evening, and strolled about the waterside seeking employment, but for several days he could find nothing, and returned home much depressed. One evening, as the sisters walked out to get some fresh air, they noticed that there was a great stir in the town. Everyone was hurrying towards the great gate—everyone seemed to leave the employment of the moment, and run with the multitude.

“What is the matter?” asked Joyce; “what is happening?”

“What! do you not know? The Emperor is coming; he will pass by this gate in about ten minutes, on his way to the château; there is not a moment to spare.” From sheer imitation the two sisters followed the crowd; *they* even felt a little curiosity at the thought of seeing the great man whose word alone had been able to keep them prisoners all this weary time, and whose will might yet detain them for years.

The road he was to pass along was already lined with spectators, and having once mingled

with the crowd the girls had to remain, for there was no turning back, however much they might wish it. Presently they struggled to the outside line, which was kept in order by some mounted police. There was a great hush in the crowd; many of those present had joined in overturning a monarchy, and were not quite sure if they were doing a consistent thing in welcoming an Emperor. "He is a great soldier," said some. "He led the men of the Republic to glory," said others. "He could still have done that without becoming an Emperor." "Ah! but it is a great thing to be Emperor," said another voice, and then there was a laugh, which died away as some one else cried, "Vive la Republique!"

"I see the Emperor," exclaimed some one near Joyce; "I see his carriage wheels at least; there are the outriders—what fine liveries!" and truly there came in view a bright cavalcade, which might have dazzled eyes far more accustomed to fine things than were the dwellers of Baume. The carriage itself was splendid, and was drawn by six white horses, the postilions being attired in a livery of blue and silver. Even in the days of Louis XIV.

nothing finer had been seen ; but very unlike the "Grand Monarque" was the occupant of this carriage. Napoleon was dressed in a plain military suit, very quiet and sombre, only the white plume on his general's hat at all relieved his attire. He was a great contrast to his surroundings ; and as he entered the crowded way, he bowed with the commanding grace peculiar to him. Many a man there present, who had been asking why he had made himself Emperor, now turned round and joined in the admiration of the hero of so many battles. It was the same voice that had cried "Vive la Republique !" which now first raised the shout of "Vive l'Empereur !" A smile of satisfaction just parted the lips of the hero—"Such a curious smile," Joyce said afterwards—"I fancied it was a smile of scorn, as if he despised the people who could change so easily;" but Patience said that it was a smile of wonderful sweetness ; whilst Jasper, who had viewed the arrival from another side, said, with a sigh—

"I never thought Boney was like that. I don't wonder *now* at his soldiers following him anywhere and everywhere."



## CHAPTER XIII.

### A REJECTED ADDRESS.

IT must be owned that Paul was very much disappointed with the Emperor's visit. To say the truth, he had expected to be on easy and familiar terms with his father's guest, and was most indignant when he found that he and Julie were banished to their play-room upstairs, and never saw the great man except on his first arrival, when the two children were dressed in their new suits, and had to stand behind their mother to help in the reception. After this, Paul found that he was to be neither seen nor heard, and Mademoiselle Fermaut told him that the Emperor had many other things to think of than the entertainment of a little boy; but Paul, being in a bad temper, persisted.

"I know that *real* kings do not behave like that. My history says that Saint Louis would

listen to *anyone* who came to him, and I am some one."

"And pray what do you want to ask the Emperor?"

"That is my secret. Julie knows it, but no one else in this house."

However, fortune smiled on Paul before the three days had elapsed which were to be the term of Napoleon's stay: quite by accident he had a private interview with the Emperor. It happened in this manner. Paul had been allowed to go into a neighbouring field to fly his kite, as that retired spot was supposed to be well out of the way. It was a fresh windy morning, but not too windy for the kite: Paul had the exciting game all to himself, as Julie had been sent for a sedate walk with her governess. Carefully the boy started the large paper monster, and gradually let out his string—the kite flew upwards, following the course of the wind, and moved on in a slanting direction, Paul following, and letting out more and more string. Presently the kite, caught by a sudden gust, gave a jerk, and oh, horror! the great ball of string fell from the boy's hands, whilst the kite flew

onward and upward, dragging the twine after it. Paul was not to be beaten; he at once gave chase, over ditches, scrambling through hedges, never pausing to think about the tears and scratches he received; at one time being on the point of pouncing upon the runaway, and then suddenly finding it beyond his reach. But at last he felt sure of his prize; he stretched forth his hand to take it, when lo! he stumbled over a large stone, and was violently thrown to the ground. Paul heard a laugh close by him, and scrambling up, angry and ashamed, he turned round and beheld the Emperor standing there alone, and smiling, if not unkindly, yet with unconcealed amusement. Paul had strayed far, and now saw that he had reached a common bordering on the public road; evidently the Emperor had left his suite to go round by the road, and was now taking a short cut to the Castle.

"Your kite is gone too far now, my boy. I fear nothing will stop it, unless it meets with some sudden adverse current; but you tried nobly to reach it, and deserved a better fate."

"I should have got it," answered Paul, still panting, and in defiant tones, "if this horrid

stone had not made me fall, and if you, Sire, had not stopped me," and the boy cast a regretful look on his fast disappearing treasure.

"Bah ! don't you know it is only paper that you are grieving for ; but if you show as much zeal to attain other and more useful prizes, you may reach a height equal to that of the kite." The Emperor did not care to consider whether the boy understood him ; he was thinking that with patience and perseverance the world could be mastered. "Come, boy, show me the way to the château."

Paul now remembered that he had conversed in this free and easy manner with the Emperor before whom princes trembled, and armies laid down their arms. He was quite confused, and stuttered a few unintelligible words, but the Emperor appeared not to notice his embarrassment.

"And what are you going to be when you are a man, and when you have left off playing with a kite ?" he asked, kindly.

"I, Sire, shall be a soldier, and I shall follow you through all the dangers of war, and win renown and a cross of honour, and when I am great——"



"Well done, Sir Soldier," laughed the Emperor, "I see a future general of my army before me; but suppose the prize was above your reach, just as was your kite, what would you do?"

"I should wait till it came down," said the undaunted Paul, "but one has but to run, and at last one succeeds."

"And when you are the great man you aspire to be, you will have nothing more to wish for."

"Then I should try to make others great and happy. Ah, Sire, I know what I should do! I would forgive all my prisoners."

"All your prisoners! That would hardly be a kind action," said the Emperor, sternly; "you would bring a scourge upon the land, and do more harm than good."

They were now in sight of the château. Paul felt that his petition must be made now or never.

"I mean I would release all the harmless prisoners. For instance——"

"Well, what is the instance?"

"I would release two English young ladies who live here; one is called Joyce, and the

other Patience, and they are very pretty. Please, sire, will you do it?" It was out at last, and Paul would have liked to have thrown himself at the Emperor's feet, as he had read in books they did, but was too confused to do it. He dared not look up; had he done so, he would have seen that he, little Paul, had been able to call up a frown on the Emperor's face.

"Did your father tell you to ask this? Who are these people?"

"No, oh no; the ladies are called Dacre, and they are friends of mine. Papa does not like them, but they do long to go back to their own country; their papa is just dead, and——"

The Emperor had now recovered his good temper.

"Foolish boy, you do not know what you are asking. If I released one, I must release them all, and then what mischief they would make. Dacre, did you say? Let me see, that was a name associated with Wright." They were close to the garden now. "Go and fly your kite, my child, and leave other things to wiser heads," and then he added, "but in time

you will make a brave general." The Emperor rejoined his suite, which was seen approaching, and Paul rushed away to a desolate spot in the garden and cried bitterly. He had lost both his kite and his petition. Oh, how cruel the Emperor was! how unjust, how discourteous! He would never, never forgive him. Little did Napoleon guess he had made an enemy that day; but he was as well accustomed to making enemies as friends.

The Emperor drove away that same day in his splendid carriage drawn by the six white horses; the same crowd assembled to see him depart, and the same cries were repeated, but one woman had the courage to cry out, "Stop the conscription!" instead of "Vive l'Empereur!" However, she was soon suppressed, and forced to move away. Paul was in disgrace, the Emperor having reported his conversation, and he was punished by not being allowed to see his Imperial Majesty drive off.

"Poor Paul," said Julie, afterwards, "you ought to have been there. Papa said a great many beautiful things, and the Emperor smiled, and then the fine carriage came round,

and the men in blue and silver;" but Paul was very cross, and said he didn't want to see all that, that he never would be a soldier, and that he hoped the Royal line would come in, and that Napoleon would die.

After the Emperor's departure, the household at the château fell into its usual quiet ways. The Marquise was not impressed by her late guest, who certainly was not famed for his drawing-room manners; but her husband was radiant—he had satisfied Napoleon as to his principles, and had shown him how little he had helped the Dacres. The idea of employing Joyce or Patience to teach her children English had likewise occurred to the Marquise, and she asked her husband again if they might learn that language. Now that there was no fear of the Emperor's displeasure, the Marquis consented, stipulating that Mademoiselle Fermaut should take them to the Dacres, to avoid the English coming to the Castle. Joyce thankfully accepted the employment, though she would have preferred going to her pupils for fear of their meeting Jasper, but happily this latter had found work, and was only at home in the evening, and he always

took care to come in by the back way. Patience worked at some embroidery at home, and this the shops took from her at a low price. The three were indeed happy, if at the end of the week they could put away a little money for the time which was always in their minds—the time of their escape from Baume.





## CHAPTER XIV.

### PLANNING THE START.

**P**AUL thought his English lessons quite delightful ; it was charming to be taught by Joyce. Certainly he found his tasks harder than he expected, more difficult than his Latin and Greek ; yet for all the world he would not have given up learning. But poor Julie made no secret of her utter dislike to anything so beyond her as learning English ; she could neither make way in the pronunciation or in the spelling, or in fact in any branch of that barbarous tongue. Joyce, on her side, did not enjoy teaching her, but tried to be patient, especially as she was well paid, and money was of the greatest importance to her. The children often brought small presents with them, which she had not the heart to refuse, as it gave them

so much personal satisfaction. Sometimes they would rush in with a basket of eggs, saying—

“Look, look, Miss Joyce, these eggs are laid by our own hens ; this brown one is especially for you, I told my hen to make haste and give you one, but the naughty one was so disobedient. The next shall be for Miss Patience.”

Another time they would bring a large basket of fruit which they had picked in their playtime. Patience was very grateful for these gifts ; they could not afford luxuries, and were almost inclined to starve themselves in order to put by more money. Perhaps this discipline was good for them, but through all their hard work, they never forgot how their mother was waiting for news of them. In the newspapers they read of 180,000 Frenchmen who were pouring out from France into Flanders and North Germany—of their crossing the Danube and surrounding Ulm ; they read too of the wonders performed in the fifteen days' campaign, and of the 80,000 Austrian troops taken and destroyed. But all this made but little impression, it is so difficult to realise the sorrows which do not touch us personally. We grieve so deeply for the loss of one of our

friends, but we cannot shed a tear over the destruction of a whole army.

Summer came and went, and the autumn set in, and still the Dacres were at Baume ; still they spent their evenings in talking of home, of Mother, Baby, and Christopher, and Edwin. Jasper would chime in, and take down their money-box to count the savings, the amount of which they all knew by heart.

“How long shall we be getting enough money?” Patience often asked ; and Joyce would add, “And when shall we start, Jasper?” Jasper tried to be very wise, and would say that girls were so impatient ; but he was quite as anxious as they were to get away, and not always as cautious, for one day, as Joyce was giving her English lesson, Patience having gone to market, she was much astonished at the sudden entrance of her brother, who burst in, calling out—

“I say, Joyce, isn't it a wicked shame ! they have killed Captain Wright in prison, and they say——” Then he paused, for he became aware that Paul's astonished eyes were upon him, and he soon saw that Joyce's face was crimson, as she said in English—



"Oh, Jasper, how could you come now? You knew I was not alone."

"I quite forgot; this news was too much for me," and then he beat a retreat.

What was to be done now, thought Joyce. Of course the children would repeat that some one talking English had come in during their English lesson; people would then begin to make enquiries—for there was not one dweller of Baume who could speak that language—and Jasper would be discovered. She saw no other way than to tell them the truth.

"Look, Paul and Julie, can you keep a secret?" She was sorry to put a burden on such youthful shoulders, but she was in a great strait.

"I can," answered Paul, "because I am a boy; but Julie is a woman, so I don't suppose *she* can."

"Nay, but women have done quite as difficult things as men. Julie, will you keep a secret?"

"I will try; indeed I will. If I find it slipping along to the tip of my tongue, I will bite the end of it, and then the pain will stop the secret coming right off. Is it about him?"

she added, nodding towards the door lately filled up with Jasper's tall figure.

"Yes, that young man is my brother; he has run away from captivity, and if anyone knew who he was, and that he lived here, they would take him and put him in prison. Can you understand?"

"Yes, and we must say nothing about it?"

"Nothing at all; you would make me very, very sorry. Even if you hear anything about him, you must hold your tongues."

"I promise," said Paul; "but do tell us about his escape. That must be a very exciting story."

Joyce was not in a mood to tell stories, but she wished to please the little people of whom she required so much, so she related some of Jasper's adventures, in the midst of which a bright idea seized Paul.

"Why do you not try to escape too? You could dress up as peasants, and carry eggs. Julie and I would help you; we could give you eggs to sell."

Joyce smiled, and answered nothing, but she treasured up the idea. How was it that they had never thought of it before? she

would propound it to the others that very evening. She now saw the plan clearly. Patience and she would make two very good peasants; they could talk French like natives, and so dressed they could go from one town to another; already, in her imagination, she had reached the coast, and was once more across the Channel, and at Paston. It must be owned that the English lessons fared badly that day, and that Mademoiselle Fermaut came to fetch her charges before Paul had repeated, "I am, thou art, he is," at which point he got hopelessly confused with his h's.

There was much to talk about that evening. In the first place, the sisters did not spare Jasper, and rated him for his carelessness, which scoldings he took very good-humouredly; the excuse he gave was that he had been full of the news about his beloved captain.

"They say he killed himself in prison with his own hand, as if *he* would be a coward! No, that means they murdered him, I feel sure—nothing more or less, the rascals! I hope you told those children to hold their tongues about me; but children never do. Besides, I was wanting to tell you that this place won't be

safe for me much longer ; the work is slack, and several persons have been asking me questions where I come from, where I lodge—that means mischief. I always say by the river, but in time they will find out.”

“Then let us go as soon as we can get some clothes,” cried Joyce, her spirits rising, having long been dormant. “We have enough money now, I feel sure ; besides, we shall not need much,” and then she explained her views about the dressing-up.

“But, oh dear ! suppose you fall ill, or something happens to us,” sighed Patience.

“Something *may* happen to us if we stay here,” replied Joyce, impatiently ; “besides, the war is raging, and there seems no chance of peace. Napoleon wishes to be another Alexander, and we may wait long enough if we wait till he has conquered the world. Nothing venture, nothing have.”

“But we shall be running into all sorts of dangers, whilst here we are comparatively safe. Don’t you remember dear Father’s caution ?”

“That is just the way with women,” said Jasper ; “they urge you on, and then at the last moment they are frightened.”

"No, no, Patience is not frightened," answered Joyce, putting her arm round her sister's neck and kissing her, "but she is older and wiser than we are, and knows that the future is always uncertain. Never mind, we have nothing to regret here, except our good doctor, and Paul and Julie. I am getting very fond of them, they are so affectionate and so funny."

The next day Joyce made an expedition to the town, and going into an old Jew's shop, she selected some peasant garments suitable for their needs; she carried away two petticoats in a parcel, as she did not want them sent to the house, for fear of exciting suspicion. On her way home she met the doctor, who had not seen his English friends quite lately, as he had been very busy among his patients. This he explained to Joyce, "and, my dear child, could you believe it, but there is an old woman of eighty who won't die. She keeps me out of my bed night after night. But I suppose it is a good sign. It is the Republic—I mean it was, before the General took to being Emperor—that made us live so long. However, you look radiant, little one, even

under the Empire. Have you by chance received news of your mother?"

"No," said Joyce. "How can we? the letters are always stopped, and now we have left off writing."

"Come, come, you mustn't despair yet."

"We have been patient very, very long, dear doctor; one, two, three, nearly four years now. I shall be nineteen next week, and I was a child when I came."

The doctor looked her over from head to foot.

"Yes, you have grown, and you are strong now, and quite pretty besides. Come, you must not complain too much of France. But what are you carrying?"

"Only a skirt," said Joyce, though she felt that her colour was rising. "Shall I walk with you as far as your house?"

"Yes, come, and, let me see, I think I will look in upon you myself this evening. I will bring you some chestnuts to roast. You know I am quite a boy about chestnuts."

Joyce was thinking of Jasper, who would have to spend his evening in a dark room upstairs if the doctor came, so she answered absently—

"Do come if you have time."

"But I have just told you I have time. By the way, have you seen a youth by the river in your walks; some one was asking me who he was; there is something odd about him. I even heard some one suggest he might be English."

"Indeed," said Joyce.

"Yes, the feeling is still bitter. They take every blue-eyed man to be English, and say he is a spy, and has escaped from Verdun! Very soon they will say I have escaped from there myself."

They had now reached the doctor's house, so Joyce said "Good-bye," and hastened home. She was more convinced than ever that they must not delay much longer, but their plans were barely matured. They might dress like peasants, but would they be taken for them? was a question that would arise in her mind; and what was almost as important, would they be able to stand the fatigues of the journey? Joyce was always encouraging the other two, but it was not because she saw the difficulties less clearly.

The doctor came, as he had promised, and

also brought his chestnuts; the smell of the roasting ascended up to Jasper, who could hardly forbear coming downstairs and joining in the feast; however, he remembered Joyce's face of dismay when he had appeared before to her company, and contented himself with expectations of eating the chestnuts when the doctor went away. Joyce, downstairs, did not enjoy her evening, between her anxiety about Jasper, and a secret fear that the doctor would stay late. Then he began about the supposed Englishman who had been seen about, till Patience dropped a chestnut into the fire in her fright, thereby receiving a scolding from the doctor.

"One would think you were guilty of having a secret," said he, carelessly, which speech made the girl turn pale and stutter something about burning her fingers.

Never before had the sisters been glad to see the doctor out of the house, but they had been on thorns all the evening. Jasper was downstairs almost before the front door was closed.

"Where are the chestnuts? Really the odour which reached me would have brought a



fox from his lair. What has the doctor been saying, that you both look scared?"

"He said people were looking and asking for you. Of course he does not know, but he looked so hard at me that I dropped a chestnut I was holding into the fire."

"Yes, I was trembling too," added Joyce, "for fear you should take it into your head to walk the decks again, as you did once before."

"Well, it's no joke now. I think I must not stay another day here."

"Oh, Jasper, but we can't go to-morrow."

"Of course not. It would never do to go all together. If I go on first, no one will take the trouble to look after me; but I have grown so much that they may think me worth catching again." And Jasper drew himself up proudly.

"Yes, you are quite a man now," said Patience, looking up at her brother. "I feel so much safer when you are with us; but don't you think we had better remain here and let you go alone? If Mother had one of us and knew the others were safe, it would be such a comfort to her."

"No, we will stick together. Father gave you into my care, and I don't mean to leave you; but now let us settle," and Jasper drew out a map from his pocket, which was already well marked and thumbed. Their best course was traced out, for Jasper had learned experience in his former flight:

"We must avoid the very small towns, as there the people are more curious, but villages and big towns are our best resting-places. See, I will go to-morrow to R——, and I shall wait for you there. I can manage to keep myself till you come, which had better be to-day fortnight, as that will be a sufficient interval to disarm suspicion, and then you can easily walk there. Carry some baskets, but you need not put much into them, as that would be heavy. I shall be in the market-place, and if I can I shall provide something to sell; in that way people will get accustomed to the sight of me, and won't ask questions."

"That is capital," said Joyce, entering into the spirit of the thing; "our difficulty will be the fear of too early a detection here."

"Yes, but they will never imagine that you are gone in the direction of R——."

Patience looked much troubled. She was unwilling to make the plunge.

"But how shall we find lodgings at R—— for that night?" she asked.

"Oh, I will look out for something, never fear."

"Well, let your something be clean," said Joyce, laughing. "I am sure the people here are not very inviting."

"Beggars, Miss Joyce, must not be choosers. Now I will wish you good-bye, as I must be up before daylight."

"But we shall be up too. Oh, Jasper, do you think we shall succeed; if we could only tell whether this is the right thing to do. I shall pray that we may be guided rightly." And Patience sighed in her perplexity, whilst Joyce kissed Jasper and kept up his spirits, although her own were very low.





## CHAPTER XV.

### LEAVING BAUME BEHIND.

**W**HAT a busy time the next week proved to be for the two girls; yet now that Jasper was gone, they could breathe far more freely. Joyce quite enjoyed her expeditions into the town after second-hand clothes and a few other necessary articles for their journey, for it was now the end of October, and the weather might turn cold at any moment. Even Patience caught the excitement, and suggested several helpful ideas.

“One thing we must do, Joyce, and that is to sew up our money in our stays. I never read any account of ladies escaping which did not mention that they sewed up their money.”

“Of course; I had forgotten that. It would not do to appear too rich, though indeed our property is not alarmingly great.”

The last week arrived, and Joyce wrote to the Marquise, saying she must interrupt the English lessons on the following Monday, as the house would not be in a fit state to receive the children. The lady concluded that some repairs were going on, so she answered the note, kindly enclosing the money which was due to Joyce. The children brought this note, and also a basket of eggs on their own account; when they were going away, Joyce kissed them with especial tenderness, and Patience embraced them as well, so that Julie remarked, "You are not going away, dear Miss Joyce. It will only be for a week; Mamma says so. Didn't she, Paul?"

"Yes; now, Julie, go with Mademoiselle Fermaut. I want to say something private to Miss Joyce."

Julie obeyed, pouting a little. Then Paul said, "Do you know, Miss Joyce, I think I have guessed a secret!"

"What is it?" asked Joyce, expecting some childish confidence.

"That you are going to run away; but I will not tell any one, not even Julie. Is it true?"

"My dear boy!" began Patience, wondering how she could put him off, but Joyce only smiled, saying—

"You would be a very dangerous foe, Paul, but you are right, and I wanted to wish you good-bye, a long good-bye, I am afraid. You see we trust you."

Paul drew himself up. "Of course you can. I never told about your brother; Julie nearly did, but I pinched her, and she jumped so, and forgot to tell. But oh! I am sorry you are going away." Joyce and Patience were pleased by the boy's affection, as he continued, "I made Mamma send all these eggs. I thought they would do to sell. When I am a man, you shall come and stay at the château, and I will make as much fuss about you as Papa did for the Emperor. I won't be a soldier now, at least not under Napoleon."

"What has made you change your mind?" asked Joyce.

"I do not like him at all; he is not a real knight, like those one reads of in history. Fancy, I asked him to pardon you, and he refused."

The sisters laughed heartily.

"What! You really had the courage?"

Paul nodded, then said he must run back to Mademoiselle Fermaut; but, before going, he put a little box into Joyce's hands, and said she must have it and not open it just yet, and before she could answer, he had made off.

"What a dear manly little fellow," said Patience; "he is very unlike his father. Now we must pay one last visit to the doctor, though we cannot tell him it is the last; how I wish we could!"

"If we don't succeed, he will know soon enough; and if we do, we shall manage to let him hear of us. What should we have done without him? I feel as if we could never thank him enough."

Monday morning came at last. The sisters rose long before daylight and put all their things in order, for they could take away but very few; this grieved them sorely, as there were so many relics of their dear father, but they hoped some one would take care of them, and that at some future period they might get them back. Everything being ready, the two sisters knelt down a few minutes and earnestly prayed for the success of their enter-

prise, if it were God's will, and if not, that they might be resigned and bear their misfortunes patiently. They knew that they had no one but God to look to, and their few simple words came from the bottom of their hearts; then slipping out quietly, they locked their door, took the key with them, and then walked for the last time, as they hoped, along the silent river-path. Very soon they left Baume behind them; they had to follow the river for about two miles before they reached a high road, not much connected with Baume; this they hoped to do before the peasants were about. Very few words passed between the sisters; they were too anxious for speech, and could hardly yet believe that the die was cast; they must go forward, and even at the risk of being brought back as prisoners again, they were glad to venture it.

"If we are captured," said Patience, answering this thought, "we shall not be allowed the freedom that we have enjoyed." This was no pleasant idea, but it made them more willing to proceed. At last they reached the road and breathed more freely. Donkey carts and all kinds of lumbering vehicles began to



appear by degrees ; some contained women, guarding, with jealous eyes, the enormous baskets which they would not relinquish all through their journey of six or seven miles, even though their husbands were driving them. Now and then they passed a man leading a cow, which he was taking to market ; perhaps the animal was the family pet going to be sold, for, now that war was raging, prices were frightfully high and she must be parted with—had not the same war claimed his two eldest sons ?—and as the man walked slowly along he muttered a few curses against Napoleon ; but this latter was then making triumphal entries into Italian towns, and the curses of a few French peasants mattered nothing to him.

Naturally, each passer-by cast a look at the two girls who walked so steadily along the road, carrying market-baskets on their arms, but the large white caps hid their faces. At last one old man, who was driving a cart filled with hay and a few sacks of corn—nearly worth their weight in gold—called out in a friendly voice, that if they were going to R—— they had better jump into the waggon,

there was room there for such slips of girls and for the corn as well. Joyce was only too glad, but Patience hesitated.

"Come, jump up," said the old man, "I shan't eat you," and very soon the sisters were resting their weary legs on the sweet hay, and watching the bright October sun rise with golden splendour in the east. Certainly their friend did not importune them with questions, for he gave all his attention to his horse, who required much coaxing to keep up a steady trot.

"After all," thought Joyce, "our escape seems very easy so far; I wonder we never tried it before." Then she whispered to Patience, "Do I look like a peasant; really I am going to haggle for the price of my eggs like a true Frenchwoman when I get to market. I know *you* would let these beautiful eggs go for nothing." Then, fearing to excite the old man, they relapsed into silence, till he announced to his mare that she must run like the wind, for they were now in the sight of R——, and she would soon have a good feed of hay and corn. But running like anything was quite out of the power or inclination of the

old horse, and it was fully half-an-hour before the trio drove into the town and stopped in front of the market.

The sisters jumped down immediately, and thanked their kind friend. Joyce offered him a piece of silver, but he waved it away, saying that they had made no difference to his mare, and that she must keep her money to buy a fairing. The girls now walked round the market; everyone was far too busy to notice them. Some were laying out their stalls in a picturesque manner; others were already calling out to the passers-by to come and taste their cheese or inspect their vegetables, whilst in a distant part of the market some dozen calves were frisking round their temporary pens. The many various dresses, the clean white caps of all shapes and sizes, now and then relieved by the red turban-like handkerchief wound round the head of an old woman, made the scene extremely lovely and pretty; but the sisters saw nothing of all this, their whole attention being given to finding Jasper. Where was he? Why was he not waiting for them, and what were they to do if he did not appear? Patience turned white with

misery, and only half heard Joyce's reassuring remarks.

"Oh, he will be sure to come; don't be frightened. See, here is a corner, where we can stand and display our eggs;" and whilst Patience still gazed round the market, Joyce chose a convenient spot, hid away their bundles, and, putting her basket on the ground, displayed her beautiful white and pink eggs. Before long a woman came up and asked their price, looking somewhat curiously at the two pretty girls, whose complexion differed so much from the weather-beaten brown skins of most of those around them. Joyce bent over her basket, and answered that she would sell them for one franc the dozen, as they were now somewhat scarce.

"Well, they are not bad-looking; if you will take off ten centimes I will have them."

"No," said Joyce, "that cannot be."

"Well, then, I will take but one dozen; here is the money." Then she added, "You are not from these parts, I should guess." The white hands, not so white as they had been four years ago, but yet not hard or red, the fair complexion, all betokened some race

different from what the buyer was accustomed to see.

Joyce was happily equal to the occasion. She smiled kindly as she handed her the eggs, saying—

“No, Madame, we are not from these parts;” and then turning away towards Patience, she let the woman depart.

“Do you see him now, Patience? Surely he will soon be coming.”

Still no Jasper. The busy folk hurried backward and forward; women screamed, men shouted, whilst the bright morning light flooded the market, casting the sharp clear shadows of the stalls on the unevenly-flagged pavement, and above the din of tongues came at intervals the lowing of some unhappy cow, just separated from her calf, as she tugged vigorously at the rope which held her a prisoner. Soon a donkey-cart rattled up, driven by a well-grown peasant lad; his dark olive face was surmounted by a knitted peaked cap placed jauntily on one side, whilst his short jacket, studded with brass buttons, sat loosely on his spare frame. His cart was filled with vegetables, among which great

bundles of leeks and sorrel were discernible, and they appeared in imminent danger of falling out, so furious was his driving. The peasant drove so near to the sisters, that Joyce snatched up her basket with an exclamation, fearing it would be run over.

"What a reckless youth!" cried Patience; but before she could add more, the donkey was pulled up, the driver jumped down, and actually nodded to them. Joyce drew back laughing and whispering—"Why, it is Jasper! I should never have known him if he had not smiled."

In another moment Jasper approached, but so good was his disguise, that it took a few seconds to persuade Patience that this was truly her brother. "Come," he cried, "help me to unload these things;" then lowering his voice, he said, "You didn't know, I saw—that was capital. You are not bad either, but too much—why, as if you were going to a fancy ball. It is my face that does it, and you must stain yours over too. I am quite in luck's way. The old woman where I am lodging was ill this morning, so she told me to bring these things to sell; she lives on the outskirts of the

town, and will take you in too. Well, I was glad to see you. I have been hoping and fearing all night." Then customers came, and Jasper took to his trade of selling leeks as if he had done it all his life, whilst the girls finished selling their eggs. They had become very weary and hungry before the market hour was over, and were not sorry when Jasper told them to get into his cart, and, cracking a long whip with much gusto, drove off through the town.





## CHAPTER XVI.

### FORTUNE FAVOURS.

JASPER'S plan was to get as quickly as he could across country to Rouen. There he hoped to find some boat to take them down the Seine as far as Havre or perhaps Honfleur, and from thence, should chance favour them, they might have a hope of falling in with an English boat, for the skirmishing crafts often came within easy distance of the land. It was a very good plan, and displayed both skill and prudence, but they had yet much to go through before they reached Rouen. At Rouen too they would incur great peril, for that town already contained English prisoners, and a much stricter watch for runaways was kept up there than at Baume or in its immediate neighbourhood. Whilst Jasper was driving his sister to their lodgings he told them this plan,



and said that if by any unhappy chance they were separated from each other, they must still try to carry out this route and trust to their meeting again. He had not forgotten to bring with him some liquid with which he had stained his own face, and now, after driving out of the town some little way, he made Patience—who did it with no little disgust—stain her fair skin, but Joyce was very merry over the operation.

“I declare now you look almost like peasants. If your French doctor were to see you, I don’t believe he would know you.”

“Certainly it alters *you*, Jasper, considerably. Now do let us go on to your old woman, for I am very hungry.”

They soon drew up in front of a small cottage at the outskirts of the town. It was surrounded by a garden, where those already-mentioned leeks were to be found, and the three entered the house.

“See, Madame, here are my sisters, to whom you promised to give a night’s lodging. Tomorrow we are going on to Rouen.”

The old woman, who was not very prepossessing in her appearance, asked eagerly for

the money which Jasper had received for her vegetables before she even cast a glance at the girls, but when Jasper had given it to her and she had counted it, she said—

“Good. Now let us look at your sisters. How comes it that such young girls are allowed to travel thus far? Have you no parents?”

“We have only a mother,” answered Joyce, who was usually the speaker.

“And where are you going?”

“To Rouen.”

“That is a long way. You will take much time to reach it on foot.”

“We shall rest by the way,” answered Jasper. “Am I not big enough to take care of my sisters?”

“Perhaps,” was the laconic answer. “But let us see; you are hungry. Sit down, and I will bring you some food.”

“Will she ask many more questions, do you think?” enquired Patience; “it is so difficult to know what one can say with truth.”

“Oh, she is a kind old soul enough, although she is uncommonly inquisitive; but don’t look so scared, dear old Pat.”

The old woman gave them a very good dinner, and never before had Joyce felt so hungry, or so thankful for her food ; neither did she forget to be grateful to God, who had been with them through that long day.

As evening came on, Jasper said he had business in the town, and went out, telling his sisters they had better retire early to bed, as they would have a long way to walk the next day ; but their hostess was not so anxious to part from her visitors, and was very eager for conversation. She began at the beginning with the question—

“Where do you come from?”

“From Baume.”

“Your brother is a fine young man ; you must feel proud of him. What is his business ? I suppose he is not always walking the country.”

“No ; he has been working on the river.”

“As you know Baume, you can tell me about my old aunt, Madame Poitou. What ! don't you know her ?”

“No. But we are not natives of Baume,” answered Joyce, wondering when this curiosity would be satisfied. “And now, Madame, will you let us go to bed, as we are very tired.”

"To be sure. So you don't know my aunt. That is strange. She is a very old woman, and people do say that she will leave a nice little sum of money when she dies; but I know well enough who will have it. But I see you are yawning. Well, come this way," and she led them to an adjoining room, and, drawing back a kind of panel in the wall, disclosed a good-sized bed, which looked as if it might have occupied that niche for centuries.

"You need not fear," added she, not guessing that their silence came from surprise at its position—which was, however, common enough in old houses—not from a fear of discomfort; "it is clean and well-aired; my aunt brought me up to look after things well. But there, you say you do not know her, which is very extraordinary," and so saying, she left the sisters and retired. They were not long in undressing, and when they had crept into bed, Patience whispered, "I do hope she won't draw back the panel in the night and imprison us." But Joyce was too tired to feel alarmed even at this dreadful suggestion, and fell asleep almost directly.

Jasper had gone out to gather what informa-

tion he could about the best road to pursue, and to find out if there were any short cuts which would help them on their way. He would much have liked to take places in the diligence for his sisters, but he knew they could not afford this, as their means were so slender, and they could not tell how long they might still have to wander. He had to use great precautions in asking questions, for the people were only too ready to look upon anyone as spies ; but experience had taught Jasper many things, and he determined that their plans should not fail through his fault, if he could prevent it. He was sorry not to have some good excuse for going to Rouen, for it was not usual to see peasants travelling far in those days. At last, having learned all he could, he came back to the cottage and went to lie down upon an uncomfortable bed on the floor, which was all that could be had ; but the youth had braved too many hardships, and seen too much of life, to be in the least degree particular about his creature comforts.

Joyce woke up when it was quite dark, and for the first moment could not remember where she was, then gradually the events of the last

twenty-four hours came back to her, and she felt a sudden glow of happiness at the thought that they were one day's journey nearer home. Suddenly she heard a slight noise ; this it was which must have awakened her ; and presently a light footfall in the room made her feel certain that some one had entered. She dared not open her eyes, but she could distinctly see that a feeble light had also been brought into the chamber. Was the old woman coming to rob them ? A cold shudder ran through her frame. There was a little money in her pocket, but the greater portion was sewed up ; yet if the old woman felt about, it would not be difficult to discover the little hoard. Should she wake Patience ? No, she settled not to do anything "rash," and therefore she waited, hearing each step as it came nearer the recess where they were sleeping. Joyce had thought herself brave, but now she knew she could no longer pretend to that title ; her heart seemed to stop beating ; she fancied her hair must be standing on end. Slowly and softly came the steps ; the light grew stronger, and Joyce was compelled to open one eye the least little bit, so that no one could tell it was

opened, so cautious was she ; then truly enough she saw the old woman near the foot of the bed : her brown wrinkled face seemed browner and more wrinkled than on the previous evening ; her lean hand shaded a rush candle, which guttered in the draught, and shed an unearthly light round the recess, throwing fantastical shadows on the aged smoke-begrimed rafters of the room beyond. The old woman bent a little forward, and, gazing at the girls, repeated slowly in a half-whisper, "They come from Baume, and yet they do not know my old aunt ; there is something strange in *that* ;" after which speech she softly pattered back to her own quarters.

Joyce was so much relieved that she could have laughed out loud, for she had indeed been frightened, and it was a long time before she could again close her eyes in sleep. How glad she was that she had not awakened Patience, and she promised herself a good laugh at her own fears the next day in company with her brother and sister.

When the morning dawned, the three were up betimes ; there was not an instant to lose, for they might be sought for, although what

they all deemed more likely was that the Prefects in the vicinity would immediately be warned of the two wandering English girls, and would trouble themselves very little about it. Not so much indifference would, however, be shown if it was discovered that Jasper, a runaway from Verdun, accompanied them; he would certainly be imprisoned, to prevent any more free journeys in the interior of France.

When they had eaten their breakfast, they took up their bundles and asked their kind hostess what they owed her.

"I can't say you have given me any trouble," she said, "and indeed you, Pierre Legros, have been very useful. If you pay me the price of the provisions, that will suffice."

She named a very small sum, to which Jasper insisted on adding, and wishing her good-bye, they started off in good spirits. Their friend watched them from her door, and even ran after them to say a few last words—"If you come by here again I shall be very glad to see you, though I must say I should have been better pleased if you had known my aunt at Baume."

Jasper, as we have seen, had taken the name



of Pierre Legros, Patience was to be Caroline, and Joyce was to turn into Jeanne. For the first time they all felt a degree of merriment; the weather was fine and not too warm, the road though straight was not dusty, and Joyce much amused them with the recital of her midnight fears. It was one o'clock before they paused at a miserable little inn to rest and have some food, but happily their arrival created no surprise, as Jasper found out that a few miles farther on a large fair was being held at a village called Granche, which lay on their road. Here he determined to stay the night, as he was afraid of knocking up his sisters before being fairly on their journey.

"If you are going to the fair," said a man who was drinking a glass of cider in the little bare room which was the only accommodation for strangers, and which contained nothing more nor less than six tiny tables, six tiny benches, and six large decanters of water, one on each table—"I am going there in my cart, and I can give your sisters a lift."

This offer was gratefully accepted.

"Where do you come from?" asked the man presently; indeed the curiosity of the

good people much amused our English friends; they answered as usual, for they had determined always to speak the truth if they spoke at all, knowing that their father would have said, "Never tell a lie even to save your life—it is denying God's power of keeping you safe in every danger."

"We are going to Rouen," answered Jasper, who preferred giving information to answering questions; "but we are too poor to go in the diligence. If I could find some one who would help us on our way, I would willingly work for them."

The man looked the youth over from head to foot, and was evidently well impressed with him. He saw before him a tall, well-made young man, with an olive complexion, light curly hair, and a fine set of white teeth, which were often seen when he smiled.

"Well," said the man at last, "you can come with me to Granche; I know the fair will bring a friend of mine there who comes from Rouen, and may be going back there after the fair. Now suppose he should want a youth like you, he might help you on your way. I don't say he *will* want one, but often he does, and he likes height." So, instead of

delaying longer at this village, the brother and sisters accompanied this new friend, whose name was Monsieur Simon, and who allowed the girls to ride in his cart, whilst he and Jasper walked by the side, the road to Granche being hilly. Now and then the old horse would outwalk the two men, and then Patience and Joyce took these occasions to congratulate themselves on their good fortune.

"I think sometimes," said Patience, "that Father can see us, and that he may be one of the ministering angels who help those in need of succour. How blessed it must be to be allowed to help people we have loved on earth!"

"Yes, and anyhow he must feel glad that—though I hardly dare say it—we may soon be at home again; but, Patience, dear, can you think why Monsieur Simon's friend requires tall men? I have been trying to imagine what can be his occupation, and why he frequents fairs. I hope he does not show off a giant made up of two tall fellows, as they used to do at the Paston fairs. Fancy Jasper figuring as the greatest wonder of the world!" and at this idea both laughed so merrily, that Jasper ran up to find out what was amusing them.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE MASTER OF THE MARIONETTES.

**J**UST at the time when the brothers and sisters were on their way to Granche, Doctor Chénier was employing himself with knocking at their door, and, it must be owned, receiving no answer. He knocked so loud and so long, that had Patience and Joyce been within, they would have been much surprised at the noise.

"It is very strange that they should be out at four o'clock this afternoon, and also at six last night; but there, one never knows what women will do next." Then turning away, he gave an impatient rap at the shoemaker's door. His wife opened the door, and enquired what the doctor wanted.

"I want to know, Madame, when you think

your neighbours will be in. I have some important news for them."

"It will be indeed news that will make them come out. No one has been in or out of that door all day, and it is my belief that no one is within at all, but I never interfere with my neighbours, and it's not my business."

"Not in there? Then where are they?"

"Who knows, Monsieur; I dare say they are acting as spies somewhere. All the English are cunning and bad. If it were not for them, we should not now be fighting."

"That is quite a wrong notion, my good woman. However, I can't argue about the war. I must find out at once whether they are there or not. They may be ill." So saying, the doctor fetched a locksmith, and proceeded to burst open the door, and then walked into the deserted house—deserted, but not empty. Several trunks were standing in the passage ready packed, but also many little things were left in their accustomed place, for the fugitives had carried away but the barest necessities. Patience had deeply regretted leaving her father's relics—his coat, his well-

ble, and many things which her mother  
ave treasured. The good doctor gazed  
minutes round him, then trying to hide  
otion he felt, he muttered, "Humph,  
ght as well have wished me good-bye.  
ll! God grant they may not fall into  
troubles than they have left behind  
Now what am I to do? I shall go at  
d tell the Marquis." This decision was  
ed by a certain spirit of spite in the  
doctor. He knew that the Marquis  
he very name of Dacre, and would  
ther hear nothing about them; but the  
had another reason besides spite. He  
that telling the Marquis would be less  
us to the runaways than telling the  
at once, who would be in duty bound  
immediate enquiries.

ave very sad and singular news," began  
tor, when he was ushered into the  
room of the Marquis.

eed! what is it? a defeat of our  
r, which you have found out before the  
ers?"

, a defeat, insomuch that the two fair  
s, which the town of Baume has been at

the trouble and expense of keeping so long, have escaped."

"The Dacres? Impossible! They are giving lessons to my children."

"Not at this minute, I conclude, as I come from their empty house. I don't doubt it; they have fled; but I am much troubled about them. What can two weak girls do, alone, unaided, and unprotected? If the Emperor would allow me, I would willingly escort them to the coast."

"Bah! Tell the Mayor, doctor, and don't get yourself into hot water with your romantic ideas;" and when this worthy man had departed, the Marquis added to himself, "Meddlesome old man, he would be safer in prison, and I feel sure will find himself there some day."

Naturally, Paul was immensely delighted when he heard the deed was really done. He felt as if he had had a hand in the escape, and he faithfully kept his promise, and never even said, "I knew it before any of you." But from that day, in spite of all his father said to him, he would never sing the praises of Napoleon, and never lost the opportunity of

g himself a Legitimist, thereby secretly  
ting his mother's heart.

was almost dark when Monsieur Simon's  
containing Patience and Joyce, entered  
llage of Granche, but daylight was of no  
quence there, as the whole place was  
d up in honour of the fair. A busy and  
scene was visible; all along the street  
were erected, also on the outside of the  
a, bordering a canal, whose placid water  
ed the lights and added to the effect.  
one seemed light-hearted and gay; under  
rge booth dancing was going on, accom-  
l by fiddles, songs, and laughter. All  
llage had turned out, and were enjoying  
te.

an you tell me the name of a quiet inn  
my sisters can sleep to-night?" asked  
of Monsieur Simon, when they had  
driven down the street. "I dare say  
will be more inclined to go to bed than to  
le fête."

onsense; young people never wish to go  
d when there is dancing in question.  
, don't tell me that; but if you go to the

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‘Lion d’Or,’ you will find a good and respectable landlady. But now I must look for my friend, and tell him about you, as I promised.”

The two girls now got down from the cart, and then the four walked about the booths looking for Monsieur Simon’s friend.

“I am keeping my eyes open for the exhibition of the giants,” whispered Joyce; “do you think we two together could be shown as the giant’s wife?” but Patience was far from taking this light view of the case, and was now looking rather distressed.

“I think it would be much better if we could go on alone as we have been going,” she said.

“Yes, it would be pleasanter, but it is a long way to Rouen, and we should take so much time; and then the longer we are, the more chance there is of our being discovered. Ah! what are we stopping for?”

M. Simon and Jasper had paused in front of a Marionette show, which was being exhibited with much success; the people were thronging round, opening their eyes and mouths in front of the wonderful performance. When the

show was over, a small boy came from behind and went round with a cap to collect what he could from the company.

"Now," said M. Simon, "come round with me, and we shall see whether Jean Lebrun can help you on your way."

"So we are to be associated with puppets instead of giants," said Joyce.

"Oh, we can't travel with those people," answered poor Patience. "What would Edwin say if he knew it?"

"Beggars can't be choosers, my dear Patience. Ah! there is the master; what a horrid face he has!" and certainly the master of the marionettes was not of prepossessing appearance. He was short, stout, with a large head covered with thick, straight black hair; his small eyes could hardly be seen, for they were nearly hidden by portly cheeks; a double chin helped also to make him less pleasing, as it completely hid any appearance of neck he might otherwise have shown. He wore a loose white blouse and blue pantaloons; his large fat brown hands were covered with rings, and he also had plain gold rings in his ears. No whiskers, but only a large black

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moustache, which he pulled continually, completed M. Jean Lebrun.

"Good evening, Lebrun. How do affairs go with you?" enquired M. Simon.

"Very bad, very bad indeed. If I had known, nothing would have induced me to come to Granche. The people here are not liberal, or the fair is badly attended, or something is the matter. I shall not stay another day at this place."

"Are you going back to Rouen, then?"

"Ay, to-morrow morning at the latest; if it were not for my little boy, I would start this evening. On the road I could exhibit at several châteaux, and that pays infinitely better."

"You are not in want of a young man to help you, I suppose," said M. Simon, at the same time looking towards Jasper, as much as to say that, if he were in want, there stood his man."

"I might be," said the master, eyeing Jasper out of the corner of one of his diminutive eyes, and noting what a strong, tall-looking fellow he was.

"Well, this young man and his sisters want

to be helped on to Rouen, and he would work for you on the way."

The master next eyed the sisters, and did not seem so well pleased with them. At last he said—

"I shouldn't mind having a young man. I am not so young as I was, and my boy is worse than useless, and then he is always tired. Now what wages would you expect?"

"I suppose you have a cart to carry the show," said Jasper, "so if my sisters might have a lift now and then, I will take the wages you offer."

The master's eyes twinkled; he smelt a bargain.

"I will give you a franc a-day and help your sisters. Well, that is agreed. I start at six to-morrow morning, but I wait for no one. Charles! Charles! Where are you, you little vagabond? That boy is always in mischief."

This was certainly true, for Charles was found with a pot of red paint, adorning his father's white canvas with stripes. He soon received a box on the ear which sent him reeling backwards, whereupon he set up a dismal howl, in the midst of which Monsieur

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Simon and our friends departed to their own lodgings.

"What a cruel man!" said Patience, as she and Joyce followed Monsieur Simon and Jasper along the crowded street. "The poor boy looked ill and neglected."

"I don't like the man's looks very much either, but we shall only be with him as far as Rouen."

Monsieur Simon was very good to them, and though he was a prosy man, he had a kind heart. He insisted on treating the party to a dinner at the Lion d'Or, and promised to call Jasper in the morning, for fear he should miss his appointment. "As to old Lebrun, you must not make him angry; his temper has not improved with his age; and then he dearly loves his money;" and with this warning, they parted for the night.

"I think," said Joyce, before she closed her eyes, "that there are a great many kind people in the world. How good these strangers have been to us."

"Yes, but that old Lebrun, I can't get his face out of my head, and fancy having to see it every day for a week perhaps."

his face can't harm us ; I am more afraid  
of the puppet's falling out with him, you know he  
stands much impudence ; we must try  
to make him patient." With which sentiment  
she agreed, and then fell asleep and  
; that the master of the marionettes was  
going to exhibit herself as a doll on his  
stage.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PARTING COMPANY.

THE first thing which the sisters saw, the next morning when they accompanied Jasper to the rendezvous of M. Lebrun, was the master having another scuffle with poor little Charles.

"That child is the plague of my life," his father said, making several ineffectual plunges towards the boy's head. "Six o'clock has struck, and the child, instead of trying to help me, has lost Queen Zenobia; I believe he has hidden her. She was dressed superbly, and cost me five francs if she cost me a penny. I tell thee, Charles, thou shalt be left behind if Queen Zenobia is not found at once."

"I will help you to look," said Patience, whose kind heart was easily moved. She took the boy's hand in hers, although she inwardly

the child's dirty and neglected

here Zenobia is, if you know." all standing in the public room in ; the master's luggage was t, and several boxes containing ady packed. Charles looked up e was not accustomed to hearing ut still he would not speak. he does not know," suggested as eager to start, and was not at as he should be about Zenobia's

o," answered the child quickly, ked his head to avoid another father, who cried out— w, you can see what the boy is mp of wickedness. Tell me, this \_"

n't."

w," said Patience, stooping down oy, "you will tell me, and then ear me in the cart. You know , off."

face brightened up, and he



“Why, I put her in the box when *he* was not looking.” Then he burst out laughing in a most provoking manner, only the presence of the girls prevented M. Lebrun from further punishing his impish boy. Now that Jasper was helping, the packing was soon finished; the stage was placed in the waggon, which stood at the door. The sisters were bidden to make haste and jump up, which they did, followed by Charles, and placed themselves on the front seat; then M. Lebrun climbed up, telling Jasper he might sit on the shafts if he liked, after which the covered cart moved off slowly, and left the lively village behind. Soon they entered an extensive wild heath-land, varied now and then by small fir woods; these woods added to the beauty of the landscape, for when the sun burst in upon their gloomy darkness, it at once transformed the scene; the red stems seemed to catch fire, the brown fir spikes which carpeted the wood now glowed crimson and red in patches, while the great brakes, just turning into every known tint, looked more like fairy trees than lowly ferns.

“How beautiful!” exclaimed Joyce, where-

Upon M. Lebrun turned towards her with surprise.

"What is beautiful?" said he; "I can see nothing."

"The trees, the sunlight—everything."

"Bah! to my mind that is all rubbish. If they cut all that down and drained the land, there would be some sense in it. Charles, sit still, or I shall put thee down to walk, and then thou canst move to some purpose."

The boy made a face, but wisely obeyed, knowing that his father would fulfil his threat. The sisters felt somewhat sad in the presence of the master; he seemed so hard, and so very unlike the usual run of kind peasants. Happily he smoked incessantly, which prevented conversation. Jasper sat on the shaft and appeared unconcerned as he whistled the "Marseillaise" with much vigour. On they went through varied heath-land and forest, till towards midday they came in sight of a few cottages, very poor and miserable, whereupon the master took the pipe out of his mouth and began to talk.

"That yonder is Camot Castle; do you see the tower peeping up? I know that there are

many children there, and I shall show my marionettes. Young man, you will have to exert yourself; I don't pay for idle hands. You won't be able to help me much, but you can unpack the boxes, and do as you are told."

"Very well, I am ready," answered Jasper, as politely as he could, for the man's insolent manner was trying.

"Your sisters can unpack the provisions and get them ready."

At last the master and Charles started off to the château, laden with part of the show, to enquire if they might exhibit; and Patience, Jasper, and Joyce were left with the waggon, the horse having been unharnessed.

"That man is horrid, Jasper, and so cruel," said Patience.

"But he can't do anything to us," answered Joyce, hopefully. "I fancy you would be a match for him if you came to blows, Jasper."

Jasper showed a stout arm. "I don't think that bulky Frenchman would resist the force of this British arm. However, let us hope it won't come to *that*. It seems our only chance of getting to Rouen before our

Money is all spent. It would have looked suspicious to have tramped so far, whilst now no one need ask questions."

"That poor little boy, I don't wonder he is troublesome, with the treatment he gets. How I should like to wash him."

"He is quite accustomed to dirt," said Joyce, laughing. "I wonder if he has a mother anywhere; he does not look like it. But here they come back."

The owner of the château had consented to see the show, so Jasper was told to come at once, and bring the rest of the things with him.

"Suppose," suggested Joyce, when left alone with Patience, "that some one had told us four years ago that we should one day form part of a travelling Punch and Judy show, how we should have laughed, and said that that at least was impossible! What a face Edwin would make if he could see you at this minute!"

"He would say that the woman ennobles the work," answered Patience, proudly.

"Well spoken, Patience, dear, but you must let me keep my opinion that he would make a

wry face, especially if he saw our worthy companion, the master."

"Well, perhaps he might; who knows? I only wish I could see him now. But pray, Joyce, attend to the fire, or we shall get into disgrace."

By the time the men came back there was a cheerful meal ready, which partially dissipated the black looks of the master, for poor Charles was again in disgrace, having cut a caper at the wrong moment, which had nearly upset the stage; and had not his father been too busy to punish him, he would not have escaped with only angry words.

The afternoon journey was rather weary work, and by nightfall the girls were thoroughly tired out both in mind and body; the anxiety they had gone through was beginning to tell upon them, and added to this, the waggon was a rough conveyance, and made all their bones ache. However, they could not complain, knowing how much more weary they would have been had they walked.

The party at last halted at a quiet, dirty-looking inn, where the master seemed to be well known. The girls preferred waiting in

the waggon till Jasper had seen to the house, and when they entered the public room with him, the landlord stared a good deal and seemed inclined to ask questions, only Jasper cut him short by declaring they were all dying of hunger, which hurried on the dinner. This consisted of a large lump of overcooked beef, served up in no very appetising manner. However, they were daily becoming less dainty, for their long journey had made them very hungry. When the meal was over, the sisters retired at once to bed, but Jasper thought it more prudent to stay below for a time at least. Poor little Charles fell asleep in his chair, and was left there by his careless father.

The landlord was a strong politician, and soon brought out from a drawer a newspaper, out of which he read the last news to some patient listeners.

"Do you see, my friends, how it is this England, this country of traitors, who is causing the war? The glorious peace had been signed; all the world was at our feet except England. She rebels; she is stubborn; she deserves the worst fate which can and will

befall her. Fear not; we shall yet see her humbled." Here followed a general chorus of "Doubtless, doubtless. Go on, Michelet."

"This is the news. The English went to a small country—to Denmark, weak and miserable trembling land—and they said, 'You must make a treaty with us.' They next go to Copenhagen. Here they say to General Peymann, 'Surrender.' He refuses. What do they then do? Why, they bombard the town for several hours; there follows a scene of confusion, of horror; cries, shrieks; three hundred houses are reduced to ashes—*ashes*, I say—and where are the families? Perhaps in their beds, who knows? General Peymann is grievously wounded; he is forced to surrender."

Here followed cries of "Shame! shame!" and Jasper felt his blood boiling over. He could hardly prevent himself from rising to defend his country, but he knew that nothing could be more dangerous in his present position, so he tried to calm himself as Michelet continued—

"All this is England's work; but this is not all. She incites Spain to rebel; she gives it

secret hopes of help. Portugal does not escape her snares. Ah! if we had an Englishman here, we should let him know our minds, my friends. We would——”

Happily they did not know that an Englishman was sitting among them. Jasper was brave, but, looking round upon the excited men, he had no wish to own his nationality, and was glad enough when Charles woke up, crying, to carry him up to bed, and thus make an excuse to get away.

“I should like to tell these people what *their* Emperor has done,” thought he, angrily; “how many *he* has rendered miserable for life; how many *he* has killed, though perhaps that was his kindest action.”

The next and several following days their journey was but little varied; now and then they went to a château to exhibit, and even stopped at a few villages to show the marionettes.

Very often Patience asked timidly if they were nearing Rouen, and received but a surly reply; the truth was that Lebrun was taking them very much out of their way in order the longer to retain Jasper's services. None of our

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friends knew the right road, so could not object; but Joyce and Patience looked anxiously at their small stock of money, daily decreasing. Jasper at last became suspicious, and guessed that they were not in the right track, so he began questioning the master.

"Are you not taking us a long round to Rouen, if indeed it is a round at all?"

The master looked black at being questioned, and said he wouldn't stand any impertinence; he ought to know the road by this time, and so on.

Jasper tried to keep his temper, and might have succeeded, if at this moment the unlucky Charles had not put in his word.

"Why, Pierre is right," he said, beginning to edge away from his father; "we passed the direct road to Rouen two days ago, and now we shan't get there till——"

The angry father started forward, and, in his passion, boxed his child's ears with such violence, that the little fellow reeled backward and fell.

Patience jumped up (for the party were encamping for a mid-day rest) and ran to the child, who, in falling, had knocked his head

against the trunk of a tree, and had fainted with the pain.

"Coward!" cried Jasper, boiling over with anger, and placing himself before Lebrun, he received a second blow aimed at his son, before he had noticed the accident. "How can you hit a child like that? You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

The master's fury was now turned against Jasper, who indeed had seized the uplifted hand.

"How dare you speak so to me?" he cried. "I will take you before the Justice of the Peace; I will get you taken up. I don't believe in your pretence of going to Rouen; you are some *mauvais sujet*—some spy."

"Please, Jasper, calm yourself," cried poor Joyce, who was much alarmed at these words; "and, Monsieur, pray come to your son; the poor little fellow has fainted."

This news had happily the effect of calming M. Lebrun, as he now became a little frightened at what he had done. Patience had the boy's head on her lap, and was bathing his face with her handkerchief, but in spite of all her efforts he still remained

unconscious. What an old, worn face he had, so unlike a child's, that it made one sad to see him.

"Oh, he is pretending," said the master, trying to hide his fears; "there is nothing that boy won't do to aggravate me."

Patience cast a reproachful glance at this unnatural father as she continued bathing, till the child opened his eyes, looking so ill, that Jasper offered to carry him to the next inn, which was already in sight. Jasper was meditating, as he walked along with the boy in his arms, how he could best separate himself from this man, whose society was becoming unbearable; besides, when were they to get to Rouen at this rate?

The inn was kept by an old woman, who was bidden by the master to take the child and put him to bed, as he had fallen down and hurt himself, on purpose to delay his journey, the father believed.

Early the next morning Jasper knocked at his sisters' door, and told them to get up, as he was soon going to start.

"What! is the waggon ready?" called out Joyce, but receiving no answer, she and

Patience did as they were bid, and were soon downstairs, only to find Jasper again contending with the master.

"No, Monsieur, you have broken your engagement with me, and I will no longer work for you ; if you will not take the straight road to Rouen, then I and my sisters shall retrace our steps. We are in a hurry to reach that town, and cannot spend all our time on the way."

"Pray don't quarrel with that man," whispered Patience, fearing more blows.

"Well, go your own way," said the master, "but I shall inform against you at the next stopping-place ; I am sure I don't want you."

"Come then, Joyce and Patience ; we need not wait another minute, as I have paid the bill."

"But I must see that poor little boy," exclaimed Patience, running back into the house, whilst her brother waited impatiently. In a few minutes she reappeared with tears in her eyes, but was not allowed time to speak with the master before Jasper hurried her off, and in a few minutes a turn in the road hid them from the inn and the lookers-on.

"There!" cried Jasper; "now I can breathe more freely. I would rather beg my way than stay with that cruel bully, even if he does inform against us. I can't help it."

"That poor boy," sighed Patience. "I don't believe he will be able to travel to-day; he complained so much of a pain in his head and giddiness. I should have liked to stay for his sake. Fancy, he put his arms round my neck, saying, 'Ah! you are good, Mademoiselle,' then he gave me a kiss; I didn't know he had so much feeling, for then he said, 'Don't go away and leave me alone with him!'"

"Poor little chap," said Jasper; "but I fancy our interference only makes matters worse. But you have had no breakfast. I hope we shall soon find a cottage, for I don't know my way at all, or how far out of it this man may have taken us. However, we mustn't say *die* yet. 'All's well that ends well.'"



## CHAPTER XIX.

### A FRIEND IN MISFORTUNE.

**I**N after years Joyce always looked back and wondered how she kept up during the few days that followed their separation from M. Lebrun. The weather changed, and they had to walk on with weary limbs, drenched to the skin and utterly miserable, for miles along an uninteresting road. Once or twice even Jasper repented having given up the comfortable waggon, and had it not been for Joyce's courage and Patience's sweet temper, they must have given up the attempt to reach Rouen. But even *giving up* presented many difficulties, for now they could not return to Baume, and where were they to go?

"I should not mind for myself," said poor Jasper one day, "it is only for you. But we

must push on ; that fellow will most likely set the police after us, and then *I* must be found out. Well, whatever happens to me, you must go on, for Mother's sake, and chance may favour you."

"We don't mind all this discomfort," said Joyce, cheerfully, though all her soaked garments were clinging to her, and she was cold and shivering.

That first night they slept in a miserable cottage—that is, they dried their clothes, but could take but little rest, everything was so dirty and uncomfortable ; but the woman was kind, and gave them directions about the road, and all the food she had in the house, which was but little. Once or twice they got a lift, and at last, after many days, they neared the town they had so longed to reach. On examining their purse, they settled they could go to some quiet inn at Rouen for a day or two, whilst Jasper looked round to procure some means of getting down the Seine.

The day was drawing to a close and it was raining steadily when they entered the ancient city of Rouen. Everyone in the streets was

hurrying home, and no one was likely to notice any sight so ordinary as three peasants gliding along in the twilight. Jasper, who kept his eyes open, at last accosted a passer-by with the question—

“Can you tell me, Monsieur, where we could find a cheap and respectable inn? My sisters are with me, and I am a stranger in the place.”

The man looked for a moment at the girls, who, even through the rain and general gloom, looked modest and respectable.

“Yes, I know just the place to suit you. Keep straight along this street, pass under the Clock Tower, and the first turning on your left will bring you to ‘The Old Clock.’ The landlady there is a worthy soul, and will not drive a hard bargain.

The man’s voice was so honest, there was no occasion to doubt him, and Jasper took his advice, followed by the footsore girls. Ten minutes more and they had reached the “Old Clock,” and soon after were ushered into a long, low, panelled room, where a party of travellers were already regaling themselves with hot soup. When the hostess appeared, she exclaimed—



"My poor children, how wet you are! Come with me at once, and take off your soaking garments. Jean Jacques, see after Monsieur. Dear me! who could have let you walk on such a day?"

When Patience found herself near a large fire, waited upon by a motherly woman, her fortitude gave way, and she actually cried.

"My sister is so tired," said Joyce in excuse. "We have walked a long way, and we are going to our mother; if she could see you now, she would thank you—oh, so much."

"Come, come, I want no thanks. I once had a daughter, my children, a bright, pretty girl, who would be about your age if she were living. Now I will bring you your dinner in here by the fire, so that you need not go in with the men."

After this, Patience soon dried her eyes, but she looked so worn and ill that Joyce became troubled. When they lay down this evening on a real feather-bed, they had cause, and indeed did not forget, to be thankful for the kindness of Widow Vivienne.

Joyce woke with a feeling of being safe, which was very delightful, though *she* knew

too well that they might be in greater  
er in this town than in the open country,  
lling with the master of the marionettes.

Patience, Patience, make haste and get  
she cried ; " what a quaint old place ! Oh,  
what a lovely spire I see ! If we stay here  
v days, Jasper must take me to explore.  
what is the matter ? " The matter was  
her sister had caught a very bad cold ;  
throat was sore, and she could hardly  
c. This was a sad beginning. Suppose  
nce should get really ill ? "

I will go and ask Madame Vivienne to  
you something warm," said Joyce, and  
soon the widow was herself bending over  
nce and prescribing for her.

Yes, it is all the fault of that imprudent  
er of yours. Poor little one ! I will  
you some *tisanne*, and you must stay in

Leave your sister to me, and go and see  
our brother has come in ; he was out very  
this morning."

yce obeyed, and was soon, in company  
Jasper, eating some bread and milk,  
a was truly delicious, and telling her  
er about Patience's indisposition.

As Patience wanted nothing but to lie still in bed, she insisted on Joyce going out with Jasper, so the two started to explore the city.

"Come and see the Cathedral and St. Ouen," said Jasper; "they have been dreadfully knocked about in the Revolution, but what remains is worth seeing; it quite beats our Paston Cathedral."

In silence the brother and sister walked down one of the noble aisles, and then knelt for a few minutes in prayer, for they felt that this was indeed holy ground, and that God had made it His Temple.

As they were examining some of the chapels, Joyce noticed that they were followed by a man who kept them in sight wherever they went. She was not usually nervous, but could not help feeling a little startled when she remarked that their follower came out of the building behind them, still dogging their steps. At last she whispered, "Jasper, do look behind you. I am sure that man is following us."

Jasper did so, and answered, "He looks very harmless. I suppose he is looking round the Cathedral as we are doing;" but hardly had

they turned up into a small quiet street when the stranger came up to them.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked Jasper, speaking first; "you seem to be following us, Monsieur."

"Will you come into those gardens?" muttered the stranger, "and I will tell you."

"Don't go, please, Jasper," whispered Joyce, clinging to her brother's arm; "I feel sure harm will come of it; we don't want anything of that man. See, he even conceals his face under that large hat."

"Nonsense," said Jasper, quickly, for he was too brave to be afraid of a man who, if he had a long beard and was taller than himself, did not look very muscular; besides, it was broad daylight."

Having reached the gardens, the stranger looked round carefully to see that they were alone, then to Joyce's great astonishment he raised his large hat, and, putting his hand on Jasper's arm, he said in English—

"I don't know whether I am doing you an injury, but I heard you say a few words of English just now in that Cathedral, and then I knew at once that we were fellow-sufferers; I

must be right, you are escaping from France ? But your disguise is perfect, whilst I—it is no good ; I can't put on the Frenchman ; why, I can't even speak the language properly. I have been through untold misery for the last week, and seeing you, I could not resist speaking to you ; and yet I fear I may only hinder instead of helping you."

"Don't mention that," said Jasper, frankly ; "if you are English we are indeed in the same boat, and as such, of course I will do all I can to help you."

"Thank you ; I knew—I felt sure you would when I first saw your faces, but I must own I was surprised that an English lady could succeed so well in adopting the foreign dress and accent."

Joyce at once felt a deep interest in this new acquaintance ; indeed it was hardly possible not to do so from the circumstances. She answered gently—

"We have, alas, been four years in France, so we have every right to speak the language well. I am sure my brother will do all he can for you ; we have a sister with us also, but we left her at the inn."

"Four years!" said the stranger; "it seems long. I also have been four years in this country, but I have never tried to speak French well; I have had but one idea, and that was getting away; I have thought of nothing else. But why should I trouble you with my personal history?"

"Why not?" said Joyce, gently; "I see we are friends in misfortune."

"Perhaps at another time you will let me tell you, but now I must not stay long here. I know that I am a marked man, and I would not be the cause of any misfortune befalling you."

"You are right," said Jasper; "but will you meet me on the bridge to-night, and then we can discuss our plans?"

"Good-bye till then," Joyce said, as she extended her hand. The stranger took it eagerly, saying, with a sad ring in his voice—

"You have not even asked my name, or anything about me; you are very trusting. I am called Arthur Morncliff——" He seemed as if he would have added more, but hesitated, and Jasper filled up the pause—

"And I am Jasper Dacre, at your service,

formerly one of His Majesty's midshipmen, at present trying to see whether my wits and my legs will carry me back to England ; this is my sister Joyce, and Patience you will soon see, I hope ; they have more pluck and courage than——"

It was now Joyce's turn to say, "Nonsense," and then to whisper—

"People are entering the gardens ; had we not better part, Jasper ?" So saying, they took leave of their new friend, and saw him glide away towards the unfrequented parts of the old town.

It can easily be imagined how eager Joyce was to tell Patience about their new acquaintance. She ran up to her room, and anxiously inquired how she was.

"I am so comfortable, dear Joyce, that I don't feel as if I should ever have the courage to move again ; that good Madame Vivienne has been up several times to doctor me and pity me ; then she has brought those two petticoats for us, she said our own were quite spoilt ; and, fancy, these belonged to her daughter, and she cried a little when she unfolded them ; and shoes too she has brought.

I told her we were very poor, and could not pay her for them ; but she only laughed, and said they were all Marie's things, and that as Marie was in heaven she did not want them, and would like her things to be of use. Was it not nice of her to say that ?"

Joyce touched the pretty petticoat with reverence as she said—

"One does not mind accepting presents like these ; they seem to come straight from heaven. It makes me more glad that we have met Mr. Morncliff, so that we can be of use to some one in our turn."

"What do you mean ?" and then Joyce poured out her story, but was a little disappointed that Patience did not receive it with more pleasure.

"I am very sorry for him ; it is not that, Joyce, but you see Jasper is rather young to judge about people, and one does not know what sort of a man he may be. What was he like ?"

"Indeed he was quite a gentleman ; he seemed to be about thirty, or perhaps not quite so old ; but his was a beautiful face, only so thin, and he had such a look of unhappiness,



that I know if you had seen him you would do all you could for him. I think he must have a very sad history to make him look thus."

"He can't have anything sadder than we have. Of course all Napoleon's victims must have cause for sorrow. Oh, Joyce, shall we get safely home? I never dare think of it for long together."

"Jasper has gone out again now, and will not be in till late; he is to meet Mr. Morncliff on the bridge, and see if they can settle upon some plan for to-morrow if you are well enough, but we must get some good excuse, for to say the truth, our new friend makes a very bad Frenchman; now, dear Patience, try to go to sleep, whilst I do a little mending, now I have the chance."

Patience smiled, and as she lay quiet; thought what a different creature her sister was from the weak fretful girl who had come to France four years ago. Now she saw before her a tall full-grown girl of nineteen, whose beauty Patience thought must attract everyone, and this made her so unwilling to let her out of her sight. Next she contrasted herself with the Patience of four years ago, and

fancied that Edwin would not think her pretty, and would not love her as much as formerly. Then she fell to thinking of this new friend, and was angry with herself for half wishing they had never met him. Suppose he should spoil all their plans?

It was late before Jasper returned, and was met at the door by the good widow.

"Ah, Monsieur Pierre, you are not a good brother! What have you been doing in the streets at this hour? I guess you have been by the river with those sailors, but they are not worth much, those men; they are only too glad to drag down young fellows like you with them."

"But you must not condemn me unheard, Madame. I have been by the river, that is true, but only to see how we could get down to Havre, for we are going there; when my sister is better, we must start at once; we are poor, and we have only just money enough to get home."

"And where is that?" asked the widow. Happily, however, for Jasper, some late traveller entered at this moment and claimed her attention, so that he was able to run

upstairs, and, knocking at his sisters' room-door, went in to give them the news.

"Well," cried Joyce, "did you meet him? I have been longing for you to come in."

"Yes, I met him on the bridge, and, fancy, I got out of him that he had only a penny loaf to-day; he has but a few sous, poor fellow, so I took him to a restaurant by the river and gave him a good dinner; he would hardly accept it, but I told him he could repay me when he was at home again."

"And did he tell you his story?" said Patience.

"Oh, I never asked him. We were discussing the best way of getting down the river; if we could hire a boat it would be all right, but we can't afford that; besides, it would be a long pull, and Morncliff doesn't look equal to much in his present condition. If you are well enough, we must try to start in the evening, Patience."

"Yes, yes, indeed I shall; I feel so much better and more rested. Will this Mr. Morncliff go with us?"

"Of course. Poor fellow, he looks as if he wanted help. I promised we should meet

again to-morrow morning in the gardens, we, and have another consultation. Now off to bed ; keep up your courage ; you will do what man has done man can do." So saying, Jasper went off to bed, leaving Patience uneasy in her own mind about this matter, who had put out all *her* plans.





## CHAPTER XX.

### "THE ANGELUS BELL."

PATIENCE was much better when she awoke the next morning; she attributed it to Madame Vivienne's kind care and attention, and, had it not been for this good woman's interference, she would have gone out with Jasper and Joyce, but she had to submit to staying in the house, much against her will.

"Cannot that tall young man take care of your sister," asked the widow, "without your running the risk of getting inflammation of the lungs, and who knows what besides?"

Joyce for once was not very sorry that Patience should stay at home; she was so much afraid of her throwing any cold water on the plan of Mr. Morncliff's joining them. Anything at all romantic was of course a recommendation to the girl of nineteen, and she was, besides, truly

sorry for her countryman. Jasper took it in a matter-of-fact way—that they had met with a man in like circumstances with themselves; that he was not so fortunate as they were; and the natural result of all this was to help him as much as lay in his power.

They had not long to wait in the gardens before they saw their new friend approaching, but he certainly looked more cheerful than on the previous day.

"I am so glad to see you," he said, grasping their outstretched hands; "I almost feared that so much happiness was not to be my portion. Now may I ask if you have settled anything yet? and also I hope your other sister is recovering."

"Yes," answered Jasper, "everything seems in a fair way to succeed. I was out very early this morning, and I found a bargeman who is going down the river this evening. He is loaded with timber, but there will be room for us. I said there were two of us and two sisters, and that we wished to go to Havre. Happily he was too stupid to ask many questions, or I should have been puzzled. At eight o'clock this very evening you must

be ready; we must take our own provisions, but Patience will see to all that for us. I dare say you can put up with our simple fare." In this way Jasper tried to make his guest feel under no obligation, and Joyce, taking up his cue, said—

"Now, Mr. Morncliff, you promised to tell us the story of your wanderings. I am sure they must be more lively than ours."

"Not now," was the answer, whilst a look of pain passed over Mr. Morncliff's features. "When we are going down the river we shall have plenty of time to talk—too much, perhaps. Did you find out where the barge is to stop, or does it go all the way to Havre?"

"He may go all the way, or have to stop at Caudebec; if so, we must try to get on from thence."

"Then you will not fail us to-night?" said Joyce, kindly; "it would look suspicious if we did not appear with our number complete."

"You are very kind. I will try and not make you run into unnecessary danger. Even now I doubt whether I am right in saddling myself upon you."

"That is all settled, so don't say another

word, or I shall think you repent having joined company; but, to make sure of you, I shall come and dine with you this evening, and then we will fetch the girls. I don't know how Patience will stand the poky cabin, which is the only shelter, but I fear she must; it is too cold now for the deck at night.”

They parted for the present; Jasper and his sister to buy provisions, and where Mr. Morncliff went they did not enquire. The Dacres once more went to the Cathedral, admired its architecture, its quaint bas-reliefs—which depict St. John the Baptist putting his head out of the prison window ready for execution, and the daughter of Herodias *dancing on her hands* before the king—then to St. Ouen, at whose shrine emperors and kings had worshipped, so that it was not till the afternoon that they came back to the “Old Clock.”

It was already quite dark when the four stood that evening in the Quai du Havre, having come down the Avenue du Mont Ribaudet to escape observation. Patience, well wrapped up, leant on Jasper's arm, whilst Joyce followed behind with Mr. Morncliff.

“Oh, how beautiful the town looks now!”



exclaimed Joyce. "Look at the lights reflected in the river, and the great stunted tower of Saint Maclou; then the Cathedral, and the delicate spire of St. Ouen, all rising out of the gloom!"

Joyce was right. It was beautiful, whilst nearer at hand, on the bridge of boats across the river at stated intervals, lights were twinkling, which were reflected on the water beneath. There was something of magical beauty in the scene, as now and then a gentle breeze just stirred the surface of the water, causing the reflections of the lights to flash in and out, as if obeying a magic wand. Joyce was, perhaps, the only one of the party who saw all this; Patience was too miserable, and was naturally rather matter-of-fact in her ideas and thoughts; Jasper was too much alive to the danger of the moment; and Mr. Morncliff was busy with his own painful reflections. The barge in which they were to travel was laden with timber; there were but few men on her, and these looked curiously at the party as they embarked.

"Come, make haste," cried the Captain; "you are late; the ladies had better go to the

cabin at once," and soon Patience and Joyce found themselves in a small dark cabin where two temporary couches had been placed for them. It was not pleasant, for the smell and dirt were a contrast to the clean room they had just left, but Patience was only too glad to lie down anywhere; she found herself weaker from the effects of her cold than she expected.

"I would rather walk about the deck all night than sleep in this hole," said Joyce.

"Indeed you must do nothing of the sort," said Patience. "What would Mother say?"

"Don't look so shocked, dear old Patience; I was only saying what I should like. I will stay here and try to sleep."

The morning sun burst forth the next day and found that it had plenty of work to do: over the river a light white mist hung, as if Lady Night had dropped her white gossamer veil as she departed in haste. It was the duty of the sun to gather up this veil and put it away, so that the banks on each side might be fully seen in all their beauty. The barge had made some way in the night, and the old capital was far behind them, hid by the many turns and twists of the river.

Jasper himself came to tell his sisters to come out of their prison.

"You will really enjoy this part of the journey," he said ; " we have found a sheltered nook for you, where you can remain all day. It is quite private too, for the timber makes an arbour for you; and, what is even more pleasing, I come to say that your breakfast is ready."

Nothing certainly could have been more delightful than the nook Jasper and Mr. Morncliff had looked out. It was away from the men and protected from the wind, yet leaving plenty of space to see the ever-varying scenery. Breakfast was almost like a picnic, and the spirits of the party rose considerably. When they had finished their humble repast, Jasper went off to converse with the men, saying he would keep a look-out to see that they were not disturbed. He fancied that, left with kind Patience and sympathising Joyce, their new friend might talk in his native tongue of his own trouble. For some time, however, silence reigned, as Arthur Morncliff gazed sadly at the river banks.

"Have you been here before?" asked Patience, quite won over, as Joyce had predicted, by the sad looks of their companion.

"Yes," he answered; "in happier days I visited all this river; little did I think I should one day be a prisoner on this soil. Do you see that curious old ruin on that conical hill? No one knows its history, but the peasants have a tradition that it was the abode of 'Robert-le-Diable,' and, though his identity is uncertain, the people will tell you many legends concerning him."

"What do they say?" enquired Joyce, who was eager for anything romantic.

"They affirm that he is still beheld wandering in his grave-clothes through the château, and visiting the cemetery; that sometimes the shadowy figure of the phantom can be seen gliding round the walls; at others he is recognised under the shape of a wolf, huge and gaunt, and at night his howl resounds through the neighbouring forest, at the sound of which the terrified hearers retire under their bedclothes, and pray to be delivered from a similar fate."

"How foolish people are," said Patience, "to credit such silly tales; it is very unbelieving, I think, for surely God would not allow such things to happen to disturb our minds."

"Yes, doubtless that is the sensible way of

looking at such things ; but yet I often fancy that people who will not believe in anything except what they can see and understand, have as much the spirit of unbelief in God's power in them as those who are too credulous. I remember, when I was walking over those same ruins, I happened to tread on a creeper which the natives call *herbe qui égare*, and my peasant guide rushed forward, calling out I was a doomed man. They say that the individual who comes in contact with it will in vain try to escape from the enchanted spot, and that all his exertions will be useless. I laughed at this at the time, but since then I have often thought how true it has proved."

"But surely there was some counter-spell," said Joyce, "for there was never an enchantment in olden days that had not its antidote."

"Yes, and this one will find favour with your sister. At evening-time, when the Angelus rang out and the weary traveller knelt to pray, the spell was dissolved."

"I like that ending," said Patience, softly ; "you see that even those old foolish sayings acknowledge that prayer is stronger than magic."

"But *my* Angelus Bell has never rung out," said Mr. Morncliff, slowly.

"Will you not tell us some of your misfortunes?" said Joyce; "perhaps Patience, who is so very wise, can produce the healing herb."

"As you wish it, I will tell you my history in a few words; indeed it is right you should hear it. About seven years ago I lost my father; he had a property in Somersetshire, which was situated in one of nature's most beautiful spots. He had married late in life, and I was his only child; needless to say how I was loved and humoured. My mother was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen, even when I remember her; and my love and admiration of her was boundless. On her side she idolised me, and bestowed upon me as much of her time and care as she could spare from my father, who was rather infirm. I was never sent to school, but had tutors at home, for my mother could never make up her mind to part from me. In this way I grew up with one great passion, the love of my mother. Perhaps, as I grew older, my father saw that I was wanting in many things, and that I was too much wrapped up in home; for, as he was

dying, he made my mother promise that after six months she would let me travel and see the world. I was to be away at least two years, and after that time I might come and settle down at home. You can guess the rest. I went most unwillingly, promising my mother that I would not stay a day beyond the two years. I was in the act of returning from Italy, and having been told that it was quite safe to travel through France, provided as I was with a passport, I had reached Tours, when one evening, without warning, I was seized, and taken to Verdun. The time since then seems almost a blank, except once, when I heard from a soldier, lately taken prisoner, and who came from our village, that my mother was dying of a broken heart." Mr. Morncliff paused; he noticed that Patience had tears in her eyes, and that Joyce was listening eagerly.

"I am so glad we are able to help you now a little," she said.

"When I heard about my mother, I determined to escape, come what would, and you see the result."

"A happy one," said Joyce.

"But the cost was—my honour; I had to break my parole."

There was a pause, and none of them spoke for a few minutes; then Joyce said in low tones—

"Surely, Mr. Morncliff, at that price your mother would not wish to have you back; she would rather——" Joyce would have said, "die of a broken heart," but paused.

"You don't know what you are saying, Miss Dacre; you cannot understand the love that has been part of my existence."

"But also part of your honour," interposed Joyce, who could be brave.

"And your brother?" asked Mr. Morncliff, quickly, catching at a straw for comfort.

"My brother was never put on his parole," answered Joyce, proudly; but then, seeing the look of deep distress on the poor man's face, she added, "he was not tried in that way, for he was considered too young when first taken."

In the pause which again followed, Patience said, "Perhaps, Mr. Morncliff, you have yet to wait for the Angelus Bell to set you free: did you not say that the traveller was released when he prayed?"





## CHAPTER XXI.

### NEARING THE SEA.

**W**HAT a calm journey they had from Rouen to Caudebec. They passed the woods and precipices of Duclair, and the dark forests of Mauny and Bretonne, and caught sight of the once famous abbey of Jumièges, which, it is said, owed its origin to Dagobert.

Mr. Morncliff had studied all the folk-lore of the Seine, and enlivened the time by telling the girls many curious legends of the places they passed. Nothing more had been said about his sad history, only Joyce tried to make up for her hard words by gentle thoughtfulness. She said to herself that he might have been her brother, though she knew Jasper could never have broken his word, and once, when she was standing near her brother, she repeated Mr. Morncliff's history.

"Oh, Jasper, I never thought of *that* when we met him at Rouen."

"Didn't you?" he said, gravely; "I did. I was afraid how it might be, but it was not my business to ask him."

"I wish I had never pressed him to tell his history."

"Perhaps it is better as it is. I see that he is an honourable man, in spite of it; besides, he must have been dreadfully tried."

"Well, I shall not refer to it again. You should have seen the look of pain that came over him when I said that his mother would rather not see him. I could have bitten my tongue off. Have you asked the man whether he means to stop at Caudebec?"

"He will not know till we get there, which will be in time to sleep on land to-night, I hope. Now I am going to bring the dinner, and remember, no English whilst I am not on guard."

"I shall feel almost sorry to see Caudebec," said Joyce. "Who knows what we shall do there?"

"It is best not to think of the future," said Mr. Morncliff, looking at the girl's bright face.

That evening they reached Caudebec, but

could not learn from the Captain whether he was going on or not—indeed he seemed surly, and Jasper fancied he suspected them, so they went to a very modest inn for the night, where the landlady stared a good deal at Mr. Morn-cliff, who seemed to her a strange countryman.

The next morning Jasper went out to reconnoitre, whilst the sisters and Mr. Morn-cliff went to explore the beauties of Caudebec.

“Far away in the middle of the stream,” said Arthur, as they were seated in a sunny corner, “there was once an island called Belcinne, which was inhabited by some poor monks in a convent. Few visitors came there, only now and then a poor fisherman stopped to return thanks to God for having saved him from the perils of the sea, or of the great wave, which rolled periodically up the river. History relates that one day the Lord of Caudebec bethought himself of visiting the lowly convent, but when his barge approached the spot he was disgusted with the look of poverty about the place, and turned his boat’s head. The poor monks, instead of being offended, only begged him to beware of the raging water, for fear his boat should sink.

“‘Do you threaten me?’ cried he, angrily.

“‘God forbid,’ was the meek answer. ‘We trust you will live long enough to be fit for death; it is only the righteous who can afford to die suddenly.’

“‘Pull away,’ said the lord; ‘as soon shall their solid island sink in the water as this trim vessel of ours.’

“‘Sooner, we pray God,’ replied the monks, and the next morning, when the Lord of Caudebec looked out of his window, behold the island had disappeared—it was submerged. They give 853 as the date of this event.”

“How wonderful,” said Patience; “is it true?”

“I believe so, but what is still more curious is that the island reappeared in 1641, and on it the ruins of an old convent, but it was once more swallowed up by the tidal wave soon after, and has not since been seen above water. But here comes your brother. What is the matter? you look grave.”

“The people fight shy of us. I am puzzled what to do.”

“Suppose we walk along the bank for a while,” said Mr. Morncliff, “we may get taken up more easily by some passing boat. If pos-

sible, I think we had better not go to Havre ; they are on the look-out there. Perhaps Lillebonne would be a good place to procure a boat ; then we might cross the mouth of the river, and go to La Roque on the other side, and wait for an opportunity to hail an English vessel."

"Trust me for not missing *that* opportunity," said Jasper. "Your knowledge of the river is of great use to us now."

"I am glad," said Arthur, simply, and so it was settled. They made up their bundles, paid their bill, and walked on. It was rather a silent walk : Jasper foresaw difficulties ; Mr. Morncliff was a man of few words, though ever ready to carry the bundles and fetch the flowers which the sisters admired, or to tell them what they wished to know of the localities.

At the next village they reached they bought some provisions, and by chance found a boat that was going to Lillebonne that evening, and was willing to take them there.

That night was one of misery to the sisters. The Rouen barge had been a palace compared with this dirty, fish-smelling, leaky craft. There was no rest to be got ; to add to their misery, the wind rose, the motion became terrible, for

they were nearing the open sea, and, to crown everything, the water washed in and soaked them through and through. They could not alter their position, so they crouched near each other in a state of hopeless misery, in the midst of which Mr. Morncliff took off his coat and wrapped it round them. Patience was too ill to remonstrate, but Joyce did so feebly.

"I have gone through wet and hunger and cold so often," he said, "that now I am proof against them; but keep up till we get to Lillebonne, and then we must get a boat at once. I feel sure, from those men at Caudebec refusing to take us on board, that they have informed against us. If Lillebonne is on the look-out for us, we must take to the open sea, and trust to our arms."

"Not *ours*," said Joyce; "but I can't believe that we have been brought so far to be forsaken at last."

"You are right, Miss Dacre, but it is not every one who can have your simple faith. Sometimes I have almost disbelieved in Providence, but since I met you I have thought otherwise."

Here Jasper came up to them and said, "This

good man has a boat moored at Lillebonne, and will let us have it for a consideration. The point is, Joyce, have we got the money? and then how shall we send back the boat when we are on English planks?"

"That will be all right," said Arthur, quickly; "I will see to that—I mean the tide may float it back. But this is indeed good news!"

"What money remains, Joyce?"

Joyce put her hand in her pocket, for the money they had sewed up had long ago been taken out. As she drew forth their little purse, the box that Paul had given her came out. "Oh, I have forgotten to open this; it seems so long ago since we left Baume, that I did not even remember I had it. She undid the parcel, and after unfolding many bits of paper, there appeared two gold pieces.

"Jasper, this will help us! Fancy, that child must have given us all his savings. Dear boy! At all events we may borrow it."

"Yes, and this removes our chief difficulty."

This happy discovery gave them courage to endure the troubles of that night, till at six o'clock next morning they put into Lillebonne.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### PURSUIT.

THE next day the small boat which our friends had hired might have been seen battling bravely against the adverse currents in the Seine. Jasper's knowledge of the French coast and its dangers were of great service, but, unassisted, he could never have brought their frail bark to its destination. The day was clear and bright ; indeed Arthur Morncliff said it would have been better had there been a slight mist, so that their movements might not have been so visible from the coast ; but as they could not order the weather, they gratefully accepted the sunshine, which at all events dried their damp clothes. Patience looked pale and ill. She had never really recovered from her bad cold, and was most unfit for this further trial, but no complaint escaped her



lips. Joyce sat crouched in a corner, guarding the provisions, which Mr. Morncliff had insisted on getting with their remaining gold piece, against Jasper's advice, who thought they should find them in the way.

"I trust these may be the last you will want," said Mr. Morncliff, "but you might have to come back of your own free will if you had not got them with you. Point de la Roque is a barren promontory, but on it is a large cave; if we could manage to run up into that, we could hide the things there and moor the boat, and then walk on to Berville, which is quite small."

"And then we shall only wait for a favourable wind. I declare on a quiet day I would venture to cross the Channel even in this."

"We shall never forget your kindness," said Patience, as she listened to the plans; "without you, we could never have managed so well."

So they beguiled the time as the two men rowed on, but often one or the other of the Dacres would stop short in their conversation when they found themselves talking of subjects that might remind Mr. Morncliff of his broken

word. He, on his side, never resented these pauses, but remained silent for a time, as if plunged in some painful reverie. By mid-day they were in sight of the Point, but the tide was not suitable for landing, and Jasper said they must lie-to a little, but that towards evening he was sure they could run ashore. This was easy to say, but not at all an agreeable process. Patience was forced to lie down at the bottom of the boat, almost fainting. The hours that succeeded were hours of misery for the sisters. The two men were forced to give all their attention to the boat to keep her from drifting, so that Joyce dared not point out how the motion was killing Patience. Never had the afternoon appeared so long; never had the sun been apparently so slow in his progress down to the horizon. At last Jasper announced that they must risk it and run up with the tide, and Joyce could not but admire the cool courage and fearlessness which her brother showed whilst directing Mr. Morn-cliff, and manœuvring the boat with the greatest skill; then she shut her eyes for a moment when he called out—

“Now for it. Hold tight, girls!” It was

a moment of great danger, so that perhaps it was as well that Patience knew little of what was going on.

"Thank God," murmured Jasper, as they were thrown with some violence on the beach by a large wave. With lightning speed he jumped out of the boat, followed by Arthur, and both were soon tugging her with all their might, to prevent her being swamped by the next wave.

At last they were safe, and they lifted poor Patience, who was insensible, with much tenderness, and conveyed her into the cave. Joyce followed, carrying as much as she could, especially the few dry wraps which remained, to put over her sister. Then she rubbed Patience's cold hands, and Mr. Morncliff brought out of his pocket some brandy which he had had the thoughtfulness to procure.

The sun was just dipping into the soft bank of grey cloud prepared to receive it near the horizon, when Arthur Morncliff stood by the boat for a few minutes alone, gazing earnestly over the water, where the beginning of the harbour could just be discerned ; on the northern jetty the Tower of Francis I. stood

out with a surrounding of light blue mist. Arthur longed to be able to pierce the veil of distance and see beyond all this—right across the Channel even to his home ; but it might not be. With a sigh he re-entered the cave, and seeing Patience sitting up, he said gently—

“We must go to the village as soon as possible. Do you think you can walk a little now? We promise you no more water for to-night at least.” Patience smiled, rose slowly to her feet, and tried to reassure Jasper, who was blaming himself for having made her suffer.

“Please don’t say that, Jasper. Walking will do me good, if you give me your arm.”

In a few more minutes the party left the cave, and, keeping close to the cliff, were soon on their way to the village of Berville, which was but a collection of poor fishermen’s cottages. Great was the excitement in the village when the four travellers entered the place asking if they could get a night’s lodging there. Had a company of New Zealanders arrived, they would not have created greater sensation than did our friends; but these simple folk were not of a suspicious character, and believed the bare facts—that the party had

landed with great difficulty, that they were forced to wait here till a favourable wind allowed them to put once more to sea, and that their boat would need some repairs, which would be done on the morrow. One room was found to accommodate the sisters, whilst Arthur and Jasper found another suited to them. All retired to bed at once, as nothing more could be done that night, and they were very weary with what they had undergone.

Almost as soon as it was light, the two men were walking towards the cave to see after the boat and the provisions. Arthur paused half-way, and, taking a telescope from his pocket, handed it to Jasper.

"I have carried this about with me for this very purpose. I dare say your eyes are better than mine for ships. We must be ready to push off at any minute when we have repaired the boat a bit, for the coast men opposite keep a sharp look-out ever since the war began."

"Yes, I had some experience of that when I was under Captain Wright. Ah, when we ran the blockade with Pichegru, that was exciting work. As to Wright, I'll tell you what, Morn-cliff, there wasn't a more honourable fellow in

all England." Jasper paused. He was sweeping the horizon with his glass. "Well, if I did see the Union Jack, it would be useless till we have patched our boat. I borrowed the only tools the village possessed."

By noon their work was done, and the boat stood ready for action. As they neared Berville, they noticed several fishermen idling on the shore. They were, however, intent on following the fortunes of a small boat which was making its way across the bay. As Jasper joined them he heard the following remarks:—

"There's a storm coming, sure as my name is Jean Leroux; look, Pierre, she won't land here just yet, whatever may be her business."

"But she is making for here, and, what is more, I know the boat; she belongs to the police of the coast-guards."

"They're looking for a conscript escaped, I dare say. They desert every day out yonder, I hear, and no wonder."

"And do they come here much?" asked Jasper, joining in.

One of the men looked up at him suspiciously, but the young man's easy manner

would have disarmed a more cunning person than the simple fisher.

"Ay, at times; but who can blame them? I'm too old to be taken, thank God, but if I had been six years younger, they would have made me go, and leave my wife, and get killed. I suppose you drew a lucky number?"

"That is yet to be tried," said Jasper, moving away, but now and then looking back at the speck of a boat and then at the clouds.

"Which will win?" said Arthur, when out of hearing, "the boat or the storm?"

"So you think as I do? If the boat wins, we are caught in a trap; but those men are good judges. She won't come in till to-morrow morning, and then landing, as you know, is not an easy job; our only chance is to give her the slip in the night. I shall tell these people we mean to go soon, so that they should not connect us with the boat."

"But she will give chase, and to put out to sea seems madness," said Arthur.

"Look here, Morncliff. Upon my word, I would rather face the dangers of the sea than be shut up again, and so leave those girls unprotected. I knew there was risk. If we

can give that boat the slip to-night, we shall have a good start."

"We must not get too near the harbour, then. If that boat is in search of us, they will be warned all down the coast. Look, the storm is coming up; they won't land yet."

Without more fuss, Jasper made his sisters collect their things, and then, making some excuse about his boat to their host, they once more all walked down to the cave.

"Do you think, Patience, you can face another night of it?" asked Jasper, when they were under shelter; "because I think, and Morncliff thinks the same, that it must be to-night or never."

"What do you mean?" asked Joyce, looking at Mr. Morncliff.

"Look out there, Miss Dacre. Of course we may be wrong, but I fancy those men are on our track; indeed I only wonder we have reached this place without hindrance."

Patience was still pale, but she was not going to be a clog; besides, did not all the future depend now upon their fortitude? so she said bravely, "I am quite strong enough now. You can start when you like."





## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE HONOUR REDEEMED.

**T**HE storm abated towards eight o'clock, and with the darkness the wind sank; the troubled waves could not so soon forget their fury, and, like a child in a passion, continued sobbing some time after the storm was over. Jasper had reckoned that they must put out to sea as soon as possible, and in this way they would most likely be able to pass the dreaded boat, which, in all probability, would also take the earliest opportunity to effect a landing. The two men had lit a small fire in the cave, and had made the ladies as comfortable as circumstances would allow; next the provisions were safely packed away in the boat, the difficulty being to get enough water. At last all was in readiness, and the boat was launched, not without a good deal of difficulty

and some danger. The clouds had not yet cleared away, so they were forced to trust to Providence for their course, their one aim being to get out to the open sea as soon as possible, and to avoid the harbour of Havre.

For a long time no one spoke a word. Every nerve was strung to its highest pitch, every sinew strained to the utmost. Patience was again lying down at the bottom of the boat, in spite of her courage; the moment she felt that terrible motion her senses seemed to depart; but Joyce was on the alert to render any help that might be asked of her. They could not even tell how much way they made, or whether in the right direction, though Jasper every now and then made some conjecture, or took counsel with Arthur Morncliff. As the hours went by, the sky began to lighten; there was no moon, but some bright stars came out, which much helped them in their course.

"Can you see the enemy?" asked Jasper, as he rested on his oars; "if I have reckoned rightly she should be landing now, and will find the prize escaped, and it would be foolish to look for us till daylight."

"True, but I fancy they will put back to the

opposite shore, Havre or some place near, and start again from thence."

"And before then we shall be safe, I fully believe; without you, though, Morncliff, we never could have managed so cleverly. It was the most fortunate meeting I have ever made. Now heave ho! we must go to work again. We shall soon drift in this current."

Never could daylight have been more welcome than it was to the wearied rowers, who, when the mist cleared, found they had made a good way in the night, though not quite in the right direction, for they were dangerously near to Havre; indeed the Tower of Francis I. was clearly visible, and, with a good glass, they felt sure they could be seen from the coast. They were nearly spent, and, in spite of the pressing danger of drifting nearer to shore, were obliged to pause for rest and refreshment, whilst Joyce took an oar to counteract the current a little. Jasper and Arthur eagerly examined everything with the pocket telescope, and for a quarter of an hour nothing could be discerned, when suddenly Jasper threw down the glass, and seized an oar.

"I never saw one of our own ships if that is

not one. Now for it! If we could only get out of sight of this horrid place we could hoist a signal. Morncliff, what are you looking at? If you have any strength left at all, use it now, for all our sakes."

"Yes, we must indeed use it now or never. There is no need to look; I feel sure, Dacre, that we have been seen, and that they have sent out a boat."

An exclamation of dismay escaped from Jasper's lips. Surely all their wanderings and perils had not been in vain—all the discomforts endured so bravely by his sisters were not to have been endured for nothing! He looked behind him and saw the English sail more clearly than before, but right away near the harbour there certainly was a boat making for them. Which would win? Alone and unassisted, Jasper must have succumbed, but his companion was exerting himself to the utmost. On they went with the one great aim before them; now was the time for Joyce to give her help, and Patience tried to do the little she could manage.

"Throw out everything you can lay hold of, Miss Dacre," cried Arthur. "There, so; we

shall not need anything, whichever way this ends."

Joyce now and then found time to look through the glass; there was no doubt now that they were pursued; with cruel speed the boat seemed to ply after them. Happily they had had a good start.

"We need hide our colours no longer. Joyce, put up a signal; anything white—that is right. Now look through the glass, and see if the vessel alters her course or not."

"I can't tell yet. Oh, if we could help you more, Mr. Morncliff," said Joyce. She was near him, and was watching his face; the look of pain was nearly gone, the large eyes shone eagerly with excitement, the veins in his forehead looked as if they must burst.

"Miss Dacre," he said, in a low voice, without relaxing his exertion for a moment, "if you are saved—I mean if you get back to England, and I do not, will you go to my mother, and tell her—yes, tell her all?—that is, if it is not too late."

"But we shall all be saved, I hope. Once within the shelter of the British ship, they must cease pursuit."

"Never mind. Will you promise?"

Joyce was too bewildered to see the meaning. She only said, "Oh yes; of course."

"And tell her it was for her sake."

Joyce again said "Yes" in a low tone, fancying he meant his broken promise.

"And, next to her, I shall thank you for having saved me."

Joyce heard the words, for she remembered them afterwards, but at that moment Patience exclaimed, "They see us! they see us! We are saved!"

"Don't be too sure," cried poor Jasper; "I can't keep this up much longer. Morncliff, you will kill yourself."

"Think of your sisters," was the only answer, "and your mother. Courage."

But the boat behind is coming on with rapidity, the figures of the men can almost be seen. If the brave English cannot hold out, if they pause ever so little, they must be taken; but Patience was praying, unable to do aught else; she was helping them in the best way. They hear the cheers through the morning air; they are British cheers. A small boat has been lowered, and is fast coming

up ; one more turn of the oars, and they are saved. The pursuers see this, and rest on their oars ; they have no wish for an unequal struggle, and they see that the prey has escaped—the pursuit has been in vain. In a moment Patience and Joyce have been almost pulled into the boat that has run up alongside ; Jasper follows ; then Joyce looks round for Arthur Morncliff, and she sees that with one last effort of his remaining strength he has turned the boat's head, and she hears his "Good-bye, don't forget," and then in silence they watch him, for Arthur Morncliff has voluntarily given himself up, and has redeemed his honour.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

### AT LAST !

**I**T was the first of November, 1807, when the "Zephyr" sailed slowly up the Southampton water. The sunlight was bathing the banks, bringing out with clearness the pretty peeps on the shore, as the vessel tacked from side to side, spreading proudly her white sails to catch the breeze. On board, the crew were busily employed putting everything in order, for that evening they would be at Southampton, and each one had a special desire to sleep on land. Upon the upper deck Jasper and Joyce were standing gazing eagerly on the English shores. Joyce could hardly believe that this was really England, and doubtless her countrymen would hardly take her for an English maiden, for she still wears the pretty peasant costume ; there being no



woman on board the "Zeyphr," she had no choice in the matter. There is, in spite of her being once more in English waters, a sad look on her face as she glances up at Jasper, who has been busy all day giving a helping hand on board, he being now quite in his element.

"How kind the Captain has been," Joyce said at last; "he goes to enquire after Patience every half-hour. I am so glad she has fallen asleep now. She declares we must go on and leave her at Southampton. Dear, good, unselfish Patience! Jasper, I can't believe that we are really near home."

"And now that we are here, I almost dread seeing Mother," answered Jasper; "and, besides, is she still at Paston? and suppose she has never heard about Father? I can't tell her; I wish there had been a chance of sending a letter."

"Yes; doesn't this teach us that there is no perfect happiness to be found on earth? I can't get Mr. Morncliff out of my head. Fancy his going back to live an exile, for no one knows how long, when home was within reach; but yet I can't help being glad too. Oh, Jasper, surely he atoned for his fault. He

came on only to help us—I know it now—and that was a real sacrifice.”

“He is a noble fellow; but then, too, think of all those other people detained over there. One’s own luck seems quite undeserved. I think, as Patience is so poorly, I shall leave you both at Southampton, and run home to Paston, and then that will prepare Mother. Fancy, I hear that the Government has decided to send the fleet to Portugal; if so, I shall most likely get an appointment. Who knows? they may make me a captain at once;” and the young man looked radiantly happy, whilst Joyce answered—

“Oh, Jasper, how can you be glad to run again so soon into danger; that is where you men differ from us women. I feel as if I should never again stir out of our parish.”

“You forget England’s glory; but, I say, isn’t it delightful to be able to whistle ‘Rule Britannia,’ instead of the ‘Marseillaise’?”

The three rescued English had been made much of by the sailors, who had shown a lively interest in them; the Captain especially was most kind, and had offered all he possessed for the use of Patience, who had fainted on

being lifted on board, and had been ill ever since. As to Joyce, she was treated like a queen, and soon made friends with all the sailors.

And now the anchor is cast; there is the usual rush made towards the newly-arrived vessel. All is bustle and confusion, and much curiosity is expressed when the news flies from mouth to mouth that there are three rescued English on board. As Jasper and Joyce are seen, followed by two sailors carrying Patience most tenderly to the nearest inn, there is a shout raised. Several rough English sailors rush forward to shake hands with Joyce. This makes her lose her composure. She tries to say some words of thanks, but her lips refuse to utter them, and the tears—which no danger had caused to flow—now spring unbidden to her eyes. Never mind, Jasper can do what is right. He says a few hearty words of thanks, which are answered by a cheer; then he follows his sisters into the inn.

I must now ask my readers to come once more into the pretty drawing-room at Paston. It has not changed; the furniture is the

same, the panelled room is unaltered, and the sunshine comes in with the same freedom as before; and yet a great silence reigns in the house—it is the silence of sorrow. Mrs. Dacre is sitting, dressed in black, near the fire, and a little girl—the baby Gabrielle, now ten years old—is sitting quietly on the rug playing with a Dutch doll, and also watching her mother, whose thoughts she knows full well, and understands the meaning of the start whenever a footstep is heard or a door opens.

“Brother Christopher is late to-night, Mother. Perhaps old Betty is worse.”

“I fancied I heard his step. Go, Gabrielle, and see who has come in.”

The little girl runs off at once, although she knew well who had come in.

“Indeed, dear Mother, it is only Jacob, who is coming in for his tea. Presently, however, Christopher came in and went up to his mother to answer the question she put to him every evening when he came in.

“Is there no news to-night, Christopher?”

“No, Mother, only our ships will soon sail to Portugal; unless we can help her, she will fall like the rest.”

"It is always war. When shall we have peace, Christopher? But how did you hear this?"

"I have just received a letter from Edwin Payne. He will be with us this evening. He says he longs to see you, Mother."

"Edwin has been as a son to me—God bless him;" and then Mrs. Dacre sighed deeply, and Christopher knew what that sigh meant only too well.

"Has the coach from Southampton come by yet? it may bring letters from the coast. I cannot help hoping—though, indeed, Christopher, I am resigned to God's will; but it cannot be wrong to hope."

Christopher was now Vicar of Paston, which the patron had given him to hold for his father, in case he came back, and, if not, for himself; thus it happened that Mrs. Dacre still lived there with her son and daughter.

"I hear the coach," cried Gabrielle, springing up, "and oh, Mother——" But the child paused. She had long ago learned never to raise her mother's hopes in vain, so now she watched in silence the figure of a tall young man hurrying up the drive. In a few

moments the bell rang, for Jasper did not like to come in unannounced, and Christopher went to the front door.

Mrs. Dacre heard a half-smothered exclamation. She rose hastily, and all the colour forsook her cheeks.

"Christopher, what is it?" she faltered, as her son entered.

"Mother, have you strength to bear good news? Jasper is here."

"Oh yes, thank God. My boy, my boy," and all Jasper could say was—

"Mother!"

"Tell me, Jasper, quickly, do you know anything of your father and sisters?"

Jasper knelt down beside her; he took her cold hands in his, and said—

"Mother, I went to Baume and I saw them all, but Patience and Joyce have come back with me."

There was no need to say more; the wife and mother understood in a moment. She saw it all in her boy's face, but the uncertainty had been harder to bear than even the knowledge of her loss.

"God has brought back my children," she

murmured, "and He will take me to my husband if I am patient. His will be done."

It was now Gabrielle's turn to come in for some notice. She could not connect her childish idea of "Jasper" with this big man, but felt very proud of him all the same. In as few words as possible Jasper told of his escape, and how his sisters were now at Southampton. In the midst of this recital, Edwin, who had quite gone out of their heads, entered, having heard at the door how "Master Jasper hisself had come home." Edwin made but one step into the room, and heard the words—

"Patience will soon be well again, Mother, when she sees your face;" then Jasper's arm was seized, and Edwin said—

"Where is she? Tell me at once! Is she ill?—my darling!"

"Patience is at Southampton, and one of us must go down there at once."

"I must go, then—tell me where she is;" but Christopher interposed, saying *he* must go, but that Edwin might come too, if he liked, although it was unlikely he would be able to see Patience that evening.

Then Christopher said his mother must go

to bed, and as he wished her good-bye, he whispered—

“Mother, we will all try to make up to you for your loss; and *he* was not alone. Surely now he must be rejoicing at our re-union.”

“Yes, Christopher, I know he is, and I will not wish him back again. Indeed, I will be patient till I join him once more.”

“We cannot spare you yet, dear Mother;” and then, kissing her, he, accompanied by Edwin Payne, started for Southampton.







## CHAPTER XXV.

### CONCLUSION.

**M**Y story is now drawing to a close. It would be needless to say, that not long after the return of the wanderers a wedding took place at Paston, and that the bride, although not quite so blooming as she had been four years previously, was, nevertheless, a very sweet woman. She had learned much during her exile, for though she had always been gentle, she was now also able to bear with fortitude the ills of life. Mrs. Dacre once more had to part from her sailor boy, who, full of hope and courage, went to distinguish himself in the Peninsular war, and won much honour, which he prized chiefly for his mother's sake. Joyce stayed at home with Christopher and Gabrielle to console her mother, whose comfort she became, and who would sometimes say to Christopher, "I always

knew what dear Joyce would one day be." Gabrielle was never tired of hearing about Baume, especially about Paul and Julie, and the kind doctor.

Also, I need hardly say that Joyce at once consulted Christopher about Mrs. Morncliff; that he made immediate enquiries, which resulted, alas, in the news of Mrs. Morncliff's death, two days before the Dacres landed at Southampton. Although Joyce felt very, very sad at this, yet she never could be thankful enough that their friend had not accompanied them; had he done so, how bitterly he would have repented! She tried to get a letter forwarded to him, but as no answer came, she knew not whether it had ever reached him.

Three years after their flight from Baume, Joyce received the following letter from the good Doctor Chénier, which ran as follows:—

"MY DEAR CHILD,—I have this opportunity of sending you a line from the land of your captivity, which my heart tells me you will not dislike. You would have laughed had you seen my face when I discovered that those sly English birds had flown! How M. le Maire sent notices this way and that! We heard of

you two seen in company with a young man, and once you were nearly caught; indeed we were told that one of your party was recaptured. I own I was sorry, but glad that you had succeeded in your attempt. All this and more you shall hear when you come again, as of course you *will* come when the Emperor is tired of keeping foreign birds in his cages.

“An event the other day reminded me of my old English friends. I was called to attend a lad, the son of a wandering showman—the poor youth was dying of consumption. I did my best for him, and in conversation he told me no one had ever been kind to him but once, and that was when two young ladies had travelled with their brother in his father’s cart. Then he described two whose likeness I could not doubt. His one wish was to see once more that pretty lady who had kissed him. Surely this was our good Patience. He died in my arms—poor ill-used, untaught boy, and I will show you his grave when you come; but you must make haste.

“As to Paul, he has gone to College, and is a dear boy. Julie is pretty and good. Paul comes privately to me sometimes and says,

‘Have you heard of *our* friends, Monsieur?’ I tell him no, but that I do not despair of doing so. M. le Marquis is graver and more gloomy than ever, if that is possible; Madame hates Napoleon more than ever, if that too is possible! I was able to collect your possessions, and I keep them safe for you and for your dear mother. When I see you, I will give them up; till then, he who keeps them is always your old friend,

“DOCTOR CHENIER.”

As for Napoleon, he proceeded from conquest to conquest, but his star was fading at last. The Russian campaign was a sad story, and after that, Europe rose up as one man against the usurper, till at last, on the 11th of April, 1814, the news flew from mouth to mouth that Napoleon had abdicated, and that he was exiled to Elba. What a year of jubilee it was for many a weary captive. How those who were still alive of the poor English prisoners flocked back, to find their homes changed—gone; their loved ones dead; strangers alone to receive them.

This was the fate of Arthur Morncliff, who at last, after *twelve* years, came back to his

home and to his mother's grave. He was no longer the thoughtless youth who had left his doting mother, but a grave man who had many grey hairs among his brown locks. As soon as he could he made his way to Paston, and there he found Joyce still living with her mother. Here Arthur met with a true welcome, and after a time he was able to see that all the past events had been for the best, because they had been ordered by Him who loves us better than we love ourselves.

I will show you one more picture, and this last shall be in France.

It is the year 1818; the château of Baume is looking its very best, with flowers blooming in the stiff garden beds, and the fountains cooling the summer air with tall jets of feathery drops. Everything is in apple-pie order, but in spite of this, the Marquis is anxiously asking his companion, Doctor Chénier, whether he sees anything amiss. But this Marquis is not our old enemy, but a young handsome man, with a noble, open, smiling face. The doctor seems hardly changed. Can it be fifteen years since we saw him?

"Do you really think, dear doctor, that they have come to no harm. Will they think the château sufficiently home-like? I have ordered a chest of tea from China on purpose for *our* friends. You know that Monsieur Jasper is coming too. Ah, doctor, I knew more than you did about our friends in those days, and I saw the brother whose presence you never suspected."

"The English are very close and sly," was the doctor's answer; "I remember that when I was talking of a suspicious young man by the river, the good Patience dropped a chestnut into the fire. Ah, ah! but there is the carriage, and your mother and Mademoiselle Julie are coming out to receive the guests. I am sorry that we shall not see Miss Patience. She is a great lady now; her husband is an ambassador. Don't walk too quickly, my legs are not so young as they were. We shall be in plenty of time to receive the guests."

Certainly the new arrivals received a truer welcome than did the great Napoleon, when he came with his six white horses and his fine liveries. It was the Marquis's own carriage that had gone to meet the travellers, and

it now drove up at full gallop to the front entrance of the château. Mrs. Dacre descended first from the carriage, and the greeting which Paul gave her was very hearty, as he presented her to his mother, also now a widow. Next came Joyce, who introduced her husband, Mr. Mornclyff, to the young Marquis, and then, lastly, there followed Lieutenant Jasper Dacre, who was helping his young sister Gabrielle out of the carriage.

And now I must bid a last good-bye, and leave you to imagine all they said to each other—how Mrs. Dacre was never tired of talking to the doctor about her husband, and how the young Marquis was always beginning his sentences with, "Do you remember?"—how Joyce had long stories to tell of the adventures of their flight, and, lastly, how the whole party often walked down by the river, and entered the little house which had been the scene of their former captivity, but at the sight of which they could now say that God had dealt very lovingly with them, and that He had brought forth good out of evil.









